THIS QUARTER

Edited & Published by EDWARD W. TITUS

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CONTENTS

for April, May, June 1931

EDITORIALLY :

Criticism à l'Irlandaise 569

ESSAYS :

The Mad Imagination, by *Montgomery Belgion* 657
A Reply to my Critics, by *Georges Duhamel* 585
The Weakness of Herman Melville, by *Ludwig Lewisohn* 610
The Word Age, by *Marius Lyle* 725

FANTASY :

That Quarter, by *J. B. Priestley* 675

POEMS :

"Oh Soul be Chang'd into Little Water Drops"; Sunday Morning; Excuse in Autumn; Brookside Reverie, by *John Collier* 637
Three Poems, by *E. E. Cummings* 599
Reincarnation, by *Ruth Fenisong* 683
Marriage Hymn, by *Edward J. O'Brien* 695
Metaphysic, by *Joseph Schrank* 723
Discovery, by *A. S. T. Tessimond* 697
A Dream, by *Romer Wilson* 667
The Critiad, by *Yvor Winters* 738
(Envoi, by *E. W. T.*)
Music in Silence, by *Humbert Wolfe* 598

STORIES :

These Mountaineers, by *Sherwood Anderson* 602
Blodwen, by *Rhys Davies* 618
Three Men, by *Kenneth Fearing* 685
I Hear You, Mr. and Mrs. Brown, by *Josephine Herbst* 709
Ninety Niggers, by *Gilbert Highet* 669
Bigger and Worse Lies, by *Florida Pier* 644
Young Wife, by *Tess Slesinger* 698

CONTENTS

THE FLYING COLUMN :

A Box of Good Cigars is Won	745
Arnold Bennett	745
The Pained Hostess	746
The Callow Criticaster	747
Inglorious but not Mute Eliots	748
Requiescat Imagist (Correspondence)	749

DRAWINGS :

by *Michael Baxte*	635
A. Walkowitz	655
Sybil Emerson	681
L. Survage	721

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THIS QUARTER

April - May - June

EDITORIALLY :

The accumulation of English and American material and the insistence of authors on being published with the least possible delay have forced us to defer to the September number the Polish material which was scheduled to appear in translation in the present one. The international issues that have appeared hitherto were the French in March 1930, the Italian in June 1930, the Russian in September 1930, the German in December 1930 and the Austrian in March 1931. In greatest demand thus far has been the Russian number, so much so in fact, that we were obliged to reprint it.

The present issue completes the second year under our editorship. The index at the end of the volume contains, as in the preceding year, a melange of names of the greatest of contemporary writers and of those who we have every confidence will before long attain greatness.

Handicapped as we are by force of the imponderable, but none the less formidable, circumstance of publishing an English-language literary quarterly in in a foreign country, great has been our gratification that Mr. Edward J. O'Brien, authority on the Short Story, honoured us by incorporating in his collec-

tion of " The Best Short Stories for 1930 ", three stories that were printed in THIS QUARTER during that year. We value the compliment.

CRITICISM A L'IRLANDAISE

" —And who do you think is the greatest poet ? asked Roland, nudging his neighbour.

— Byron, of course, answered Stephen.

Heron gave the lead and all three joined in a scornful laugh.

. . . . . .

— You may keep your mouth shut, said Stephen, turning on him boldly. All you know about poetry is what you wrote up on the slates in the yards and were going to be sent to the loft for.

. . . . . .

— In any case Byron was a heretic and immoral too.

— I don't care what he was, cried Stephen hotly.

— You don't care whether he was a heretic or not ? said Nash.

. . . . . .

— I know that Byron was a bad man, said Roland.

— Here, catch hold of this heretic, Heron called out.

In a moment Stephen was a prisoner.

. . . . . .

...Nash pinioned his arms behind while Roland seized a long cabbage stump which was lying in the gutter. Struggling and kicking under the cuts of the cane and the blows of the knotty stump Stephen was borne back against a barbed wire fence.

— Admit that Byron was no good.

— No.

— Admit.

— No.

— Admit.

— No. No. "

This illustration of moral suasion and practical inculcation of canons of literary evaluation is taken from Mr. James Joyce's " A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. " To guard against any expression of displeasure over the marginal caption, let it be understood that it was not intended to convey anything typically Irish. It only so happens that the incident had been described by the author as having taken place in Ireland, and the characters involved were young Irishmen; nothing else. That there may not linger the faintest doubt on that score, we shall furnish a companion illustration, this time of liberal Italian origin : The other day we received a visit from an Italian gentleman. In the course of conversation he

discovered a book in the Italian language the postman had that same day deposited on our desk. A work of philosophy, and we had only just had time to glance over it in cutting open its pages. " The book promises to be interesting," we said to our visitor. He looked at it for a while, then noticing the author's name, threw the book down on the table as if it were a cursed thing, saying indignantly : " Fascista! "

It is an open secret that Stephen—Stephen Dedalus in Joyce's book—is autobiography. The book was written about 1904-1914. The Artist, Stephen, that is, confessed that he was leaving his native country " to forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race. " With the exception of one or two short visits to his home-land, he has lived in voluntary exile ever since.

Whether Stephen Dedalus still maintains his youthful enthusiasm for Byron as a poet; whether he would still be willing to suffer torment for the sake of that enthusiasm; whether the smithy of his soul has successfully accomplished the forging of the uncreated conscience of his race, no data are at hand to enable one to affirm or deny. However that may be, after a lapse of between fifteen to twenty years, evidence has been furnished only the other day that the conscience of at least one member of the race, as far as it sits in judgement on works of literature, still remains uncreated and in conflict with any sort of enlightened critical theory.

PATRIOTISM AS INSPIRATION

Poets need not be patriots. What in quiet moments of retrospection one might be inclined to class as great poetry has not been written under the stimulus of patriotism or nationalistic feeling. Resorted to deliberately as a source or motive of imaginative creation, it must in the end prove as barren as any other *sought* stimulus. There are no decoys to ensnare inspiration. If that be so, perhaps we should not have said that poets need not be patriots, but that they *should* not be patriots.

Mr. W. B. Yeats, in an early essay, tells how he and Lionel Johnson had founded—actually founded—their Art and Irish Criticism on the romantic conception of Irish nationality. Had the enterprise been at all realizable, Yeats ran the much better chance of achieving some sort of practical result than Johnson. The latter understood only how to reduce political thought to verse, but Yeats had dreamed of transforming love of country into a patriotism

of hate, fervid Irish hate,—a much more absorbing and more powerful emotion than love. Like all romantic movements, theirs also was marked by much muddling, if not muddle-headedness. Despite sincere intention professed at all hands to build up a national Art, the situation soon grew troublesome, when it became apparent that others had other notions as to what the poetry of Young Ireland should be. And so Yeats set out to attack verse written by certain Irishmen because he considered it based on a morality and politics that impaired its value; his and his party's verse being attacked in turn, because it was not deemed expressive of certain doctrines or necessities of the moment. Yeats and his partisans soon discovered that even in the best of causes art cannot live on extrinsic subterfuges; discovered that artists " who are servants not of any cause, but of mere naked life, and above all of that life in its nobler forms, become protesting individual voices. "

The Celtic Twilight in letters has not lifted from that day to this.

SECTARY AS CRITIC A young Irishman has recently produced a full-dress study of a contemporary poet, whom he measures with the religious-chauvinistic yardstick, forming his estimate on the basis of creed, opinion and attitude, rather than on that of aesthetic experience, thus recalling to us the superannuated and unenlightened manner of art evaluation we had read of in Joyce's " Portrait of the Artist. "

Whether it was that the mind was willing, but the flesh too weak to hobble after, or whether the flesh was in healthy functional swing, but the mind in a quandary, the young Irishman has found himself torn between two influences. There was the responsibility imposed by acceptance of a commission to write a study, which, unless it were an appreciation, there whould have been little point in ordering to be written, and there was the author, still too much of a good Irish-Catholic to make a good European. Face to face with his subject, a heterogeneous type to be sure, neither quite American nor quite English, nor quite Catholic nor quite Puritan, yet all of these, and more, rolled into one, he found him an embarrassing specimen indeed. So, instead of making " eine gute Miene zum bösen Spiel, " the young Irish author has made " eine böse Miene zum guten Spiel. " Instead of a study, he wrote a good old-fashioned Irish shindy.

THE MAN OR HIS WORK We cannot recall any principle more relevant to the discussion of critical attitude than that laid down by Mr. T. S. Eliot in his book of essays, " The Sacred Wood ", namely that " honest criticism and

sensitive appreciation are directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry ". Or the remark in his essay on Dante : " The less I know about the poet and his work before I begin to read it, the better. " A most sensible view, indeed, since anything we may learn of a poet's personality will not normally affect the state of mind we find ourselves in after reading a given poem, while still in ignorance of the author's person or the degree of importance attributed to his work. On the other hand, attention first directed upon the poet's personality or social, moral, political, or such other considerations, as are not strictly and purely artistic, may well sub-consciously, if not frankly consciously, create in the reader a *parti-pris* that may imperil what might else have been a normally pleasing or displeasing, appreciative or unappreciative, reaction to his work. It follows that criticism of poetry, if it is justifiable on any hypothesis at all, is valueless when it is not practised with detachment from the poet's personality.

It is the disregard of that principle in Mr. Thomas McGreevy's " Thomas Stearns Eliot, A Study " (Chatto and Windus, London), which renders the book a useless production. It dribbles irrelevancies and inconsistencies throughout its pages and at every step displays the writer's, we shall not say, incompetence, but congenital inability, to understand or appreciate a poet of the type of T. S. Eliot, despite all lip-service and cheap and frequently contradictory compliments to the contrary. Although the book is filled with a swashbuckling sort of self-assurance, its author does not hesitate to take occasional refuge on the fence where he sits and chews the cud, uncertain at all at all which way to jump next.

INSULTS TO DEAD AND LIVING

We suggested that instead of composing a study he had produced a quarrel. He calls St. John Ervine a garden cabbage; William II a caricature of a monarch; he shies stones at Shaw and Sargent. Voltaire and Anatole France could not write poetry, —and they can't answer back. Cocteau is merely a young man in a hurry. Giraudoux treats his Amphitryon with the amused condescension of the free-thinking professor who knows better. Ezra Pound is a professor *manqué* who should have stayed in America. Sir Joshua Reynolds is that born old professor devoid of a single illuminating line; poor D. H. Lawrence was " poles apart from all intellect, "—how the shades of these must moan! He seems to have a special grudge against professors and showers liberal invective on their heads. Da Vinci was intellectually dishonest. Shakespeare's "The Taming of the Shrew" is a piece of vulgarity. Arnold Bennett is that " fivepenny English master. " The Spanish men of letters have nothing more serious than Neapolitan lampshades and child's penny worlds to occupy them. Going as far back as Eli-

zabeth Tudor—how many centuries is it since that poor repressed spinster has stopped plucking the daisy : he loves me, he loves me not ?—he accuses her of having, by her secession from Rome, caused the breakdown of British ideals, and proves it, as he thinks, by the suicide in the Great War of George Winterbourne, the hero of Richard Aldington's novel, " Death of a Hero "! All of that,—and throughout one wonders what connexion there can be between such a variety of matters and T. S. Eliot's poetry.

YES — NO!
NO — YES!

The book is full of fun, and it is almost worth the two bob net it is selling for. The author quarrels with the subject of his study, Thomas Stearns Eliot. When the latter writes : " ...*I do not hope to turn again*, " our young Irish critic pulls up sharply and back-chatters : " I feel I know better than he does, I not only hope but I *know* that he assuredly will turn again. " When Eliot solemnly affirms : " *I rejoice that things are as they are*, " do you think McGreevy will let him have his way, or give him heed may be ? The divil he would! Instead—and you would think he knew better than to say such a thing—he prints it in his book that the " distinguished artist is in despair (though resigned) because of his own sterility. " Then, as if regretting the *faux-pas*, he adds that that is not much anyway, since even the saints have had their periods of sterility. Which might raise the pretty problem whether it was not due initially to their sterility that they became saints at all. But we will let that pass, owing to its delicacy. Then he starts on a new tack and gives a wallop to Mr. Eliot's Church, the Anglo-Catholic, " the bastard, schismatic and provincial if genteel kind of Catholicism, " since " to be an Anglo-Catholic, to try to compromise between John Bullishness or Uncle Sammishnes, and Catholicism is almost to try to reconcile Mammon and God. " As if Mammon had never formed a definite step in the hierarchy of divine intercessors. In point of fact, we believe that Mr. Eliot was for a time connected with banking in some capacity before ever he " tried "to effect any such mcgrievous compromise. It did not bring him down in the world. A little dose of the banking medicine would not hurt Mr. McGreevy much. It might teach him the always useful sense of values and responsibilities, at least.

" THE CRITERION" ALL WRONG

He scolds Mr. Eliot's review, " The Criterion, " for about two pages or more, resenting its particular kind of dulness, which he declares to be a rather professorial and rather snobbish kind; it serves, he says, as a kind of exchange for ideas between the second-raters of all Europe. He is afraid, it seems, that

" in the future professors would keep the artist in place. " He should know, since he himself has taught at the Ecole Normale in Paris the young French idea how to grow. He is much incensed that a Harvard professor should have explained to Mr. Joyce, in the pages of " The Criterion, " how he really ought to write if he wishes for the approval of New England. Which speaks volumes for McGreevy's sense of humour when throughout 70 pages he tries to make Mr. Eliot understand how he should write if he wishes for the approval of Thomas McGreevy. — The larva of querulousness spins on so extravagantly that Mr. McGreevy becomes himself entangled in the process of cocoon formation and tied up in a dispute with himself. On p. 1 of his " Study " he complains sadly of " the falling off in vigour and vividness, in pregnancy, suggestiveness of words, in technical adequacy to the subject in Mr. Eliot's most recent book of verse, 'Ash Wednesday', " This on p. 1, — but on the last page but one he writes that there are passages in " Ash Wednesday " that " transcend everything Mr. Eliot had written in sheer contemplated static loveliness. " There is a decided weakness for leaning, but always too far, back or forward.

The conflict Mr. McGreevy engages in with himself takes place on a variety of fields. It assumes a zig-zag character, and one can never be sure where and when it is likely to break out afresh. He chides Eliot repeatedly for writing verse that is disdainful, plaintive, over-fastidious, wincing, whimpering, despairing, resigned, satirical, ironical, satanically melancholy, etc. Verses written before " The Waste Land, " as well as verses written after the publication of that poem, were all more or less so blemished. We say *except* " The Waste Land, " because to that poem the author of the " Study " pays the greatest compliment he is capable of, saying that it " has influenced us all almost as much as Mr. Joyce's ' Ulysses. ' In a sense it is more nearly complete than 'Ulysses'. " But even here he slips mercurially through our fingers; for he finds disdain also in " The Waste Land, " only : " in 'The Waste Land ' the disdain finds its rightful place. " " The Waste Land " is more nearly complete than " Ulysses, " because the latter is but the first part of a vast undertaking that is not yet finished, while the former has a definite ending : " *Shanti shanti shanti*, " the nearest equivalent of which Sanscrit word is " The Peace that passeth understanding. " It hath passed Mr. McGreevy's who, after a great deal of interpretative spluttering, folds away neatly his tail between his legs and runs away, throwing out over his shoulder a parting observation to the effect that if anyone is interested in the poem " without being quite able to ' make it out, ' I assume that it is because they are attracted by its self-evident literary merits, and that comment on these is, therefore, almost needless. " " For what it sets out to be... ' The Waste Land ' is practically beyond mere literary criticism...." We cannot for the life of us imagine what a poem can set out to be other than a poem. If the author had said straight-forwardly that " The Waste

Land" is beyond literary criticism, his position would be clear enough. But it is impossible to pin him down any more effectively than, according to Teddy Roosevelt, you could nail a lump of apple jelly to the wall. And so we have it that "The Waste Land" is beyond literary criticism, but only *practically* so, and the literary criticism is *mere* literary criticism. He persists: "I have not dwelt on its literary quality. For that matter I do not think I need to." This after protesting a few pages earlier, discussing this same "Waste Land," that "it is not the theme, but the poet's treatment of it that gives a work its value," or in plain English, that same literary quality all over again that he denies coolly in the next breath. If Saint Ignatius had not founded his order, it would have remained for Saint Thomas to found it!

ELIOT EXCUSED It has already been noted that our Irish critic bemoans on page 1 the falling off among other virtues of Mr. Eliot's poetry, the falling off also in technical adequacy, but on p. 9 we find the direct contrary: "I do not propose to dwell at any length on his technique which is usually self-evidently adequate to his matter." "I am mostly concerned"—these again are his words—"with Mr. Eliot's attitude, as I think he would have me be." — But suddenly and quite unaccountably something happens, and we read this: "But I must insist that I think Mr. Eliot is scarcely to be blamed personally for this attitude of the early poems." Why, does the reader suppose, is Mr. Eliot not to be blamed for the attitude of his early poems? It seems he is not to be so blamed because he had "deserted New England for Old England at a time when Old England was still to all intents and purposes Edwardian," — a most dreadful era, when "passionless, fastidious, would-be aristocratic, Nonconformist Liberalism, the nearest thing to New Englandism that exists in Europe, was triumphant." Now the cat is out of the bag: "It is little wonder therefore that he should have been infected with something of the glibness of his generation." Unless this has been put down for mere sound's sake, we defy any one in his sober senses to explain why a poet should be less blamable for his poems or the attitude of his poems written in one country and generation, than for the writing of them in another country or generation. Of course, it is all simon-pure nonsense. It is at bottom nothing but a smoke screen behind which, patronizingly and mealy-mouthed, the author exposes Mr. Eliot's innocence regarding *Irish fairies* when he "opined" that, according to Mr. W.B. Yeats, they were "charming creatures in their native bogs." Now Mr. McGreevy will not have it that way: As for Mr. Yeats's fairies being charming—he retorts—they could only be considered so if it were charming to lead people to destruction, as in "The Land of Heart's Desire." Now all this has obviously nothing to do with an appreciation of

Mr. Eliot's poetry, but it furnishes a surprisingly pertinent illustration of how little a thing suffices to give Mr. McGreevy an excuse for turning away from the task he undertook, but relished not at all.

FAIRIES AND FAIRIES

Of course, there are fairies and fairies. Both kinds may, possibly enough, consist of good as well as bad ones; of charming creatures, as runs the phrase objected to, or destructive, as it is claimed they are. It is not the other kind of fairies whose good fame he impugns: it is the supernatural kind that he callously slanders. In the name of happy childhood the world over, we protest against such vandalism. We dislike suggesting, but the author of the Eliot monograph mistook or deliberately refused to understand the import of Mr. Yeats's famous play. In any event he had better be on his guard, for sooner or later the traduced leprechauns will get him.

Mr. McGreevy has been teaching the French; let a Frenchman now teach him. Let him listen to Prof. Louis Cazamain of the Sorbonne, who writes in his "History of English Literature": "'The Land of Heart's Desire', a little masterpiece, in which the wistful aspiration of the beyond, the eternal restlessness of unsatisfied hearts, are crystallized in pure allegory." Lest he object to receive instruction from a Frenchman, and he, a detested professor, let him open the "Collected Poems" of that singing Irishman, James Stephens, and read the lilting lyric, "The Fairy Boy", he who was

> "*Rapt away,*
> *Snapt away,*
> *To a place where children play*
> *in the sunlight all the day.*"

— Let him read what a priest had done to him:

> "*...With candle, book and bell,*
> *Tolling Latin like a knell,*
> *Ruthlessly,*
> *From the tree,*
> *Sprinkling holy water round,*
> *He drove the Fairy down to hell,*
> *There in torment to be bound.*
> *So the tree is withered and*
> *There is sorrow on the land.*"

VULGAR PLUTOCRACY

But Mr. McGreevy's most virulent abuse is reserved for America, a country he has never visited; frankly, if stupidly, basing his generalization on reading and hearsay. If he has ever read or heard

anything in America's favour, he keeps silent about it. He starts out by saying: "It is, I suppose, generally accepted that America as a whole is the most vulgar plutocracy that the modern world has seen." A man is permitted to hold the opinion that America is a plutocracy, even the most vulgar plutocracy that the modern world has seen, if he prefers to put it that way. Some might deny it point blank and others might consider it a moot point or vehemently affirm it. But to say that America "as a whole" is such a plutocracy means nothing at all. America "as a whole" is no more any one particular thing than any other country as a whole is any other particular thing, with the possible exception of Russia, where everything has been triturated down to a powdery level. And if, as he says, "even the poor American is proud of all the millionaires," it is because the poor American was probably one himself only yesterday, or will be one tomorrow, and we imagine it is rather a fascinating experience to be a millionaire, and rather a comfortable one. Probably also harder to achieve than writing literary studies. Even the divine Arthur Rimbaud chucked the poet's halo for the money-maker's crown of thorns. What a pity fate was against him. Voltaire—the thorn in Mr. McGreevy's exhibitionistic side—pretty well managed to amass sackfuls of both kinds of glory.

MASS MEETING OR BURLESQUE

And if "the poor American is equally proud of all the splendid skyscrapers they build for the biggest big business ever," it is because they are splendid indeed, and they have enriched the world's sensibilities in architecture, whereas our Irish ironist's innuendos are evidence only of a picayunish mind and footling snobbery. To say as he does that "America is not so much a country as a mass meeting," is as much of a staggering, sprawling, poteen-steeped witticism as the retort that Ireland is not so much a country as an eternal rumpus might well be inspired by a synthetic gin jag. *Tout de même* we have never heard of the hat having been passed in the Irish circus in support of an American cause, but we have participated in American mass meetings, where the hat has been passed to make Ireland free (?) — Hurray! We would hate to say what we think would have been the fate of Ireland, if, say for the last fifty years, the American mass meeting had been barred to Irishmen. Perhaps also the American police would have been cleaner.

THE PADDED "STUDY"

We have by now more than sufficiently shown the cantankerous, ungracious, bumptious, superior and utterly insincere manner in which the "Study" has been composed. Mr. T. S. Eliot merits every

sympathy for having become involved in such a grotesque performance. This all the more so that the suspicion does not seem altogether unwarranted, not altogether *aus der Luft gegriffen*, that the author had not been given too much to reading Eliot's works except for an eleventh hour's hunt for quotations, with which the book abounds. Even these, for all we know, may have been procurde *per manum alienam*, because in a note of acknowledgment we find him expressing thanks to two collaborators for helping him " in various ways in the preparation of this essay, " containing 71 pages in all, of which a good fourth consists of quotations from Laforgue, Corbière, Yeats, but chiefly from Eliot. Four pages are devoted to a disquisition on royalism and classicism; as much again to abuse of America, *ditto* of professors, and other matters having nothing in the least in common with the subject of the " Study, " for which no sort of preparation other than a goodly supply of bile was needed. To the study of Thomas Stearns Eliot properly speaking, there has been devoted only just enough matter to form a slender pamphlet, the rest being reprinted material and padding.

McGREEVY vs. ALDINGTON

It appears that our critic divides Mr. Eliot's " output " into three phases : verses written before the publication of " The Waste Land "; then " The Waste Land "; then verses published afterwards, particularly " Ash Wednesday. " The ante-" Waste Land " phase, if we except occasional amiabilities, does not strike him very favourably. It is the " Prufrock " phase, and according to our critic, there could not be much in that, because it only expressed New England's spiritual bankruptcy. Although a born poet, Eliot's cultural background (" he had the genius of it as Henry James had the genius of it ") is stated to have provided him with nothing to grow poetical about. And so he wrote satirically about it. Yet he himself was still of it. One is always " of " whatever one is satirical about. Which is very funny, because in his diatribe against the genus professor, Mr. McGreevy quotes Mr. Yeats's well-known satire on the

> " *Old, learned, respectable bald heads....*
> *They'll cough in the ink to the world's end,*
> *Wear out the carpet with their shoes.*
> *Earning respect, have no strange friend.* "

Does he mean to suggest that Mr. Yeats is " of " whatever he is satirical about and,

> " *must accounted be*
> *One of that mumming company?* "

The young Irishman, who is first of all a Catholic, is displeased

with the poet for being ironical about the True Church and sympathizes with him for suffering too much from Protestantism. Mr. Eliot, he tells us, believing nothing, achieved nothing that could be poetry, as Voltaire and Anatole France had not. Mr. Eliot's puerile and tittering scepticism could not but be poetically sterile. Withal he remained Puritan, and like all Puritans confused the ideas of love and sex. During that early phase he was a melodramatic writer and in the poems of that period the spirit of satirical comedy was uppermost in him. All of which, and much more of the same kind that we refrain from further noticing, is, as Mr. Richard Aldington once said, writing on T. S. Eliot, "Cheap journalism." Mr. Aldington, who is a too well-seasoned all-round man of letters to permit questions of morals, religion or political allegiance to interfere with his literary judgment, also wrote on Mr. Eliot's ante-"Waste Land" poetry. This is what he said, writing before the publication of "The Waste Land": "His desire for perfection is misrepresented as puritan and joyless, whereas it is plain that he discriminates in order to increase his enjoyment. But of course refinement will not be applauded by those who cannot perceive it, nor will intelligence be appreciated by those who cannot understand it; literary criticism is not the only human activity wherein ignorance is made a standard."

"THE WASTE LAND"

After that early period, followed "The Waste Land," when "the gentlemanly whimpering was to cease as the disdainful wit was to cease." Mr. Eliot would now seem to have moved up towards a spiritual plane. On this plane, when disdain occurs, it is still disdain, but in its rightful place, because, says our critic, "like the scorn in 'Ulysses,' it appears in a scene of love-making where there is no love." But disdain was manifest also in earlier verse on occasions of similar meretriciousness. The point sought to be made therefore fails. If "The Waste Land" is preferred by Mr. McGreevy and he bestows greater praise on it, it is not because a more catholically-minded critic speaks through him now, but because a narrow-minded Catholic speaks through the critic. Whereas an abandoned Puritan is supposed to have spoken in Mr. Eliot's earlier verses, Mr. McGreevy now begins to discover evidences of the poet's turning his back on the nimble, playful, satirical, perhaps even hedonic, and moving towards the spiritual. He seems to hear the noise of slamming of trunks and pulling up of tents in preparation of starting on an officially conducted tour to... Canossa. Yes: the poet "has moved towards Catholicism." But in the later "Ash Wednesday," Canossa is still a long way off. Hence, Mr. McGreevy does not like "Ash Wednesday" so well. And judging by Mr. Eliot's last pamphlet, "Thoughts after Lambeth,"

the tour has been abandoned for good. An Anglican, not a Roman, halo has definitely been bespoken.

"WASTE LAND" INTERPRETED

Our young critic subjects " The Waste Land" to an interpretation, " an altogether personal interpretation." Just how edifying this proves will be made sufficiently clear by two examples : The line :

" *London bridge is falling down falling down falling down,* "

he adumbrates as : " disintegration again." And the lines :

" *And we shall play a game of chess,*
Pressing lidless eyes and waiting for a knock upon the door, "

he interprets : " It is scarcely necessary to suggest that it means death." But for which comment one might have thought it meant that the maid was about to come in to announce the bath was ready. The rest is mere rehearsing and re-echoing or paraphrasing of, at times perhaps difficult but intelligible, text: futile interpretation all of it, by the author's own admission, since " human nature is not so very diversified, and all interpretations tend to be at any rate more or less right." If so, why have wasted time, paper and printer's ink ?

Much as our critic may have tried to get under his subject's skin, both personality and work were too much for him. Mr. Eliot is at once a subtle, complicated, frank and outspoken personality, and his work is apt to be troublesome if not read with thoughtful attention. To do him justice, the critic did his best to discover what Mr. Eliot was about. One might go so far as to say that he not only tried to understand, but also to emulate, and that at great and grievous risk and peril of his very soul. For it must not be overlooked that Mr. McGreevy is a poet in his own right. When Eliot uses in his poem the German : " *Wo weilest du?* ", McGreevy answers, in a poem of his own, in the same language : " *Folge mir Frau.* " Mr. Eliot in " The Love Song of Prufrock " writes :

" *In the room the women come and go*
Talking of Michelangelo, "

and Mr. McGreevy in his poem, " School of..." echoes :

" *So Dublin's rows*
Michelangelos... "

Mr. McGreevy censures our Anglo-American poet for being, in his poem 'Hippopotamus', ironical about the Church. Readers of Voltaire will remember the confession which the latter makes in " La Pucelle " of having had for the boon-companions of his youth good-for-nothings who had made fun of the servants of God :

" Dans mon printemps j'ai hanté des vauriens...
Et se moquant des serviteurs de Dieu."

In his poem from which we have already quoted, Mr. McGreevy, we hope not under the influence of any crapulous associations, asks —we dread to repeat it—

" Doome-quick's moulting swans
Middle-aged
Drably-white
Sleeping now and
How long since your last confessions?"

Swans, mind you! The only difference we see is the one that naturally exists between a swan and a hippo.... But we must not jest on a matter of such gravity, nor must we refuse him compassion, when in that same poem he exclaims :

" My muse, how thou art costive!" (*)

MR. ELIOT HIS OWN INTERPRETER

In a short paper contributed to a no longer existing English review, which may have escaped Mr. McGreevy, but might have modified, had he read it, some of his rash conclusions, Mr. Eliot declared : " I do not believe that an author is more qualified to elucidate the esoteric significance of his own work than is any other person of training and sensibility, and at least of equal intelligence. " Which is quite true, and we had a not unamusing experience ourselves proving it. We had been engaged in translating some French contemporary poetry into English. Several lines in the text gave us a great deal of worry. They were just beyond us. We called on the author and asked for an elucidation. He read the text—his own verses—and answered : " Je ne me rappelle plus. Dites ce que vous voulez. " Which was done.

We apprehend that if Mr. Eliot would or could reveal himself *à nu* to his monographer, morally, philosophically, poetically, spiritually, socially and in every other way, it would not be helpful to either of them in the least, and that simply on the grounds of literary or artistic incompatibility. His is a mentality and artistry that must remain entirely beyond Mr. McGreevy's ken, and it is because there are legions of critics whose incompatibility with the artist or his work must inevitably invalidate their critical conclusions, or at least affect their sincerity, that we have gone to such an inordinate length in this *causerie* on the young Irishman's very small book. In pure intellectuality as an artist, we should be hard put to find Mr. Eliot's counterpart in contemporary English letters. If we should go beyond the language line, we might be tempted, with some quali-

(*) Transition, No. 18, p. 117.

fications, to place him alongside Paul Valéry.* In taste, manner and mannerisms, as well as in command of all the tricks and finesses of the trade, he is a *revenant* from the seventeenth-eighteenth century, clothed in the habiliments of the twentieth, plus the full enjoyment of every accumulated advantage of intervening mutations.

By Mr. McGreevy's standards of spirituality, religiosity, seriousness, worthiness and nobility of subject-matter—eschewing satire, caprice, surprise, playfulness, frivolities, stark intellect—he must prove wanting. But such as he is, he must be accepted or left alone. Mr. Ludwig Lewisohn, in an essay on Whitman which THIS QUARTER will print shortly, quotes Whitman's line: "*Do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is something else.*"

Such an eminent artist as Synge wrote: "The poetry of exaltation will be always the highest, but when men lose their poetic feeling for ordinary life, and cannot write poetry of ordinary things, their exalted poetry is likely to lose strength of exaltation, in the way men cease to build beautiful churches when they have lost the happiness in building shops. Many of the older poets used the whole of their personal life as their material, and the verse written in this way was read by strong men, and thieves, and deacons, not by little cliques only."

It is only when we will not, or cannot, admit that life and *arte liberatrice*, which is an escape from it but still of it, teem with minor as well as major (are they minor and major?) experiences and evoke expression of minor as well as major emotions, each having its relative weight, importance and being, that, like a squirrel in its revolving cage, we obtain no more than a fleeting foot support and remain barred from the vaster sphere of life's and art's completer economy.

And so it is that we conceive the spiritual principle of Mr. Eliot's art and his spiritual principle as an artist, for art has its spirituality as well as its practitioners.**

"HOMAGE TO JOHN DRYDEN"

But there need be no speculation as to any theories, methods or characteristics of Mr. Eliot the poet. He stands fully revealed to those who will read him. He has written his own monograph in many well-known critical essays. Mr. Richard Aldington was the first, we believe, to call attention to the fact that Mr. Eliot, as a critical essayist, is at one with Mr. Eliot the poet. At the time of Mr. Aldington's writing, only "The Sacred Wood" had been

(*) To our unequivocal dissent from Mr. Mc Greevy's 'Study' on T. S. Eliot we wish to add our equally unequivocal testimony to the excellence of his translation of Monsieur Valéry.

(**) "Che l'arte non possa avere un fine estrinseco, e non possa perciò essere strumento de edificazione morale, è un ovvio corollario della sua spiritualità." GIOVANNI GENTILE, *La Filosofia dell'Arte*, Milano, 1931.

published. "Homage to John Dryden" which appeared later, more than re-affirmed his sound critical judgment. The essay on Dryden, from which the book takes its title, and in which Mr. Eliot takes up the cudgels in the defence of Dryden's reputation as a poet, is almost prophetic in its application to the "Study" on Eliot here examined. Step by step he meets objections made against Dryden by critics insensible to his genius, which are strangely identical with the objections signified by Mr. McGreevy against him. Even as the latter now deprecates the material out of which Eliot's poetry has been constructed, so Eliot observes that "the depreciation of Dryden is not due to the fact that his work is not poetry, but to a *prejudice* that the *material*, the feelings, out of which he built, is not poetic." When one reads Eliot's clean-cut judgement that "Dryden is one of the tests of a catholic appreciation of poetry" (small *c* in catholic, printer, please!), the veriest tyro must admit the futility of insisting that the tortoise should be a gold-fish. He points out that Dryden provides "the element of *surprise* so essential to poetry," an element so often occurring in and so characteristic of Eliot's earlier verse, which Mr. McGreevy carps at. Finally, as comment on the latter's serious disappointment, that there has been a distinct falling off in "suggestiveness of words" from the quality of Eliot's previous work, as exemplified by "Ash Wednesday," we would quote from the essay on Dryden: "He (Dryden) bears a curious antithetical resemblance to Swinburne. Swinburne was also a master of words, but Swinburne's words are all suggestions and no denotation.... Dryden's words, on the other hand, are precise, they state immensely, but their suggestiveness is almost nothing."

The only thing that might in some sort have compensated the utterly disappointing character of this "study" on Mr. Eliot would have been the presence of a useful bibliography, as is generally supplied with books of this character. That failing, the work is unredeemed. Had a bibliography been provided it would have saved the book from what is more than a slight error. The critic states that "Mr. Eliot's output since 'The Waste Land' has been mostly in prose. His early book of criticisms, 'The Sacred Wood,' was followed in 1929 by another: 'For Lancelot Andrewes,' and in 1930 by a short essay on Dante." This is misleading. There has also been a book of three essays "Homage to John Dryden" (The Hogarth Press), from which we have quoted. In addition there have been published in The Ariel Poems Series (Faber and Faber): "Marina," "A Song for Simeon," "Journey of the Magi," "Animula,"—four items at least—with drawings by E. McKnight Kauffer, and, of course, "Ash Wednesday." This *à titre de documentation.*

E. W. T.

GEORGES DUHAMEL

A REPLY TO MY CRITICS*

I have been on many journeys. Only once have I come back with a feeling of discomfort. On one occasion only I have landed from the liner, which had brought me home, and felt that I had not enjoyed my travels, that I had not enjoyed the great country of which I had had some glimpses, and that perhaps even, in the moment of landing, I was become a little less fond of my native France. This was in 1928, at the beginning of the winter, upon my return from America, upon my return from those United States which I had not gazed upon without anxiety, upon my landing in that France which suddenly appeared to me, not dirty—who could find American towns clean?—but narrow, close, sleepy, benumbed.

It required several days for me to recover my own France, several weeks to overcome my resentment, a whole year to put together and set right the grievances which I sought later to voice in *Scènes de la Vie Future*.

The world is full of people who judge America without having set foot in it, and with such people nobody of course ever quarrels. I admit my chief fault to have been that I actually went there. I should be quite ready to promise never to do it again, but "there's many a slip——"

* Critics of the standpoint taken in *Scènes de la Vie Future*, M. Duhamel's book on "Americanism."

If, then, I am reproached with having passed through America too rapidly, I do not deem the criticism pertinent and shall not take it into consideration. In the sphere of knowledge, time of itself carries no weight. Publish that you have passed two weeks in Kamtchatka, and no doubt some one will spring up to point out to you that two months are essential. Thereupon more devoted specialists will declare that a knowledge of Kamtchatka requires no less than a stay of four seasons. The recognized experts then will not fail to insist that a whole lustrum is about obligatory. And I can hear the pure-blooded inhabitants of Kamtchatka forthwith exclaiming that one must have been born in the country and have spent a whole lifetime there to understand the least thing about it, and that even so those only may claim some relative knowledge of that blessèd land who are descended from a true and long line of natives, and, indeed, that in order to open one's mouth on the subject of Kamtchatka, one should not only have been born there, but—a paramount qualification—have died there.

Despite the seductiveness of this last argument of all, I still think, and repeat, that time has nothing to do with the matter. I sincerely regret having visited certain towns of the United States before writing my book, and I should like to be able to say that I had never been in them. For a good many years, I had been hoping for a suitable opportunity of expressing my feelings about certain phenomena or events, about certain developments and certain deviations of so-called Western civilization. I had wanted to write a book about the cinema, the gramophone, the motor-car, "rationalized" industry, sport, insurance, advertising, the State's various encroachments, and what not. In sending me to visit a country in which all these features of contemporary life are displayed, as it were, paroxysmally, fate precipitated matters and supplied me with my model.

As it happens, I do not think there can be found in my

book a single detail which errs in material exactness. But, in any case, I do not consider that I was required to be as moderate, either in my ideas or in my terms, as I should have had to be in a travel book. I was really writing an essay on the advance of civilization and on the direction which that advance is taking, and I illustrated it with several scenes for which America did no more than supply me with the plot, the colouring, and the outlines.

I have always harped on the same note. If suddenly I have become somewhat strident, it is because I believe it is high time to draw and hold the interest of a world in jeopardy. All the questions at present stupefying the minds of reasonable onlookers, all these questions and especially those connected with revolution and war, are dominated by the supreme, ramified, and obsessing problem of civilization. This no sensible man would dream of doubting. Let the rhythm of industrial life, for example, be seriously upset in any great nation, and at once there occurs either an international conflict, or a social conflict, or both together. Thus to condemn the errors and excesses of certain methods becomes the urgent duty of whoever cherishes order as the greatest good.

What I sought to do in my book was to examine and describe a set of symptoms which one is entitled to call "Americanism." The disease is already widespread.

Of course it is difficult to attack Americanism without sometimes offending America. Yet I took care to avoid any allusion to the political or economic relations of France and the United States. I repeatedly defined my intention in the hope of avoiding all remarks about gratitude. It was wasted labour. There are always well-meaning people eager to defend the Himalayas or rehabilitate the Ocean. I shall not content myself with reassuring them. Instead I invite them to defend that precisely which I attacked, viz. the cinema, standardization, advertising, etc., etc. And that's that.

So generous was I that I depicted Americanism in the apogee of its triumph. Today one could depict it with its back to the wall. At this end of the year 1930, there is no need to be a great pundit in order to understand how, despite deceptive appearances, American methods can provide no valid solution for the notorious economic problem on account of which they have, over there, neglected nearly all the others. There has been uneasiness, a crash, a panic——. Were such happenings needed in order to make us realize that no great moral principle underlay America's anarchical bids for temporal success, for the most illusory of riches?

Nevertheless, I did my best to keep America out of reach of the attack, so that Americans might understand they were not involved. In spite of this, numbers of their ready advocates have sought to pick up a glove I had not thrown down. A situation already delicate enough has been rendered more so, and I have been reproached, as I am still being reproached, and as I shall, I feel, be reproached for a long time, with having failed to understand the best sides of America.

Did I fail to understand them? It should be obvious enough that I did not deal with them. I gave no picture of the jolly house in New London, where my attentive friends were more interested in their delightful autumn garden than in any building even one hundred storeys high. Certainly I did not describe Professor S———'s family, his stalwart and care-free children and their smiling mother. Likewise, I did not mention that so companionable friend I made in New Orleans, nor the sunken roads running between the cotton fields, nor the munificently endowed laboratories, nor the resplendent hospitals, nor the famous scenery of Vermont—which, incidentally, I never saw—amid which cultivated middle-class people lead an idyllic existence. All these were pictures which my title did not in the least oblige me to paint. I was describing, be it noted, *Scènes de la Vie*

Future—after all a fairly modest title—and not scenes of American life.

I was describing, I was representing, an evil, or some thing I considered to be one. Of course I was compelled to confine myself to my patient's symptoms. If, being a doctor, I were to undertake the description of a sufferer from pneumonia, would I be criticized for not mentioning that my subject was charitable, that he loved his mother, that he had blue eyes, and possibly also a rather well-turned leg?

When, about twelve years ago, Jacques Rivière sent me the book which he had written while a prisoner of war and which he called *L'Allemand*, I said to him in effect: "I envy your courage. I, my friend, would not dare to write a book entitled *On the Snail*." As it happens, I do not rate very highly that dubious pastime of judging a whole people on the strength of a few specimens. Last summer I was returning from a visit to Germany, my twentieth I should say, and I gave an eye to my travelling companions in the train. They were Rhenish Prussians, who were carefully drawing up the time-table of their stay in Paris, and they were proposing impartially to visit, one after the other, the Sainte Chapelle and the Lapin Agile. I may confess I laughed. But I did not heap anathema on the German tourists. I am only too well aware that many of my own countrymen, when abroad, also divide their time between museums and night clubs, and that some of them even do not divide their time and deliberately forgo the museums. Because I am somewhat attached to the French language and what it means to me, I cannot avoid being apprehensive when I hear it spoken abroad. I anticipate horrible floaters. I fear the unfortunate sample.

If caution is necessary when one attempts to produce an estimate of an immense and certainly varied people, it is not when one is judging a type of civilization, the machinery and the effects of which are prefectly familiar to us

and the impudence of which does not dispose us to be considerate.

In short, I did my best to depict Americanism without involving Americans. Now that I see that there are some who do not wish not to be involved, I can only bow before their valour.

Many Frenchmen who know America well have taken the trouble to tell me that they share my fears, but that they have taken care to conceal their opinion because they had been entertained while over there. I can understand this attitude. I too should certainly have been paralyzed by the same thought if it had occurred to me to judge the individual man instead of the social animal. Like everybody, I have met delightful cultivated Americans. Often, would you believe it? I have met them in France. If I did not make them take part in the conversations contained in my book, it was because many of them are my friends and discussion between us is impossible.

Moreover, I do not see why my hosts' courtesy should ever prevent me from letting them know in time that the gas is leaking in the nickel and marble bathroom, or that something is burning out of sight in the electric kitchen. I was not trying to annoy, I was warning, my American friends. Dash it all! a warning is not uttered in the same tone as social small-talk is. A warning may even have to be shouted.

I have been reproached with drawing attention to the hideousness which is involved in man's very condition, and have been told that whether there is standardization or not, this hideousness there will always be. "You describe the stockyards of Chicago," it has been said to me, "but have you been to La Villette?"*

To settle this question, I may well repeat what an

* M. Duhamel is referring to an article by M. Yvon de Lapaquellerie in *La Revue Européenne* for August-September 1930. The Paris shambles are at La Villette. — Translator's note.

American lady once said to me, smiling to indicate how nice was the distinction she drew. " Many of my countrymen," she said, " mix up the categories. They give to purely technical achievements, for example, that same awe-struck attention which in France you keep for the creations of the mind, of art, and of faith."

True enough, when a foreigner turns up in Paris, we do not insist upon his going to La Villette. We advise him to look in at the Louvre. If a man of the people here in France were consulted, he would not, I imagine, fall into any howling faux-pas. He would say : " Well, go and see Notre Dame, or watch the Seine from the Pont Neuf, or run out as far as Versailles——" Undoubtedly, he would never bring in questions of size and cost, the questions which, in the United States, muddle the ordinary man's understanding. Fortunately, no Parisian would bother about how much the Church of Saint-Etienne-du-Mont or the Madeleine had cost to build, simply because these buildings are priceless. Thank heaven, I have never met anybody able to tell me the height of the Panthéon in metres and centimetres. Every child in Paris knows that the Eiffel Tower stands three hundred metres high, because that remarkable fly-cage is a typical production of the quantitative genius. It is in the nature of such productions invariably to be exceeded. The Eiffel Tower measures three hundred metres. Soon it will be said : The Eiffel Tower measures only three hundred metres.

But let me return to the shambles. That La Villette is a horrid necessity goes without saying; our digestive tract is also a necessity, a wretched necessity. We mention our digestive tract to our guests as little as possible. On the other hand, it is the rule in Chicago to exhibit the stockyards. Extremely intelligent and highly-educated men, men born on the shores of Lake Michigan and who nevertheless have never been butchers, press you to witness this spectacle as an exemplary and wonderful

display of American power. Thus, not to speak of the stockyards upon one's return would be almost a betrayal.

I may add that I did not give this gloomy description for the fun of it. I needed a picture of a factory on the "standard" model. I had to select from among the different kinds of industries I had inspected over there. I plumped for the one which everybody insisted was among the most significant.

Some observers make no attempt to dispute that my warning was timely, but they see no cause for misgiving. "It is unlikely," they say, "that what succeeds in Pittsburg or in Milwaukee will ever get a footing in Paris, and still less in Draguignan or in Bourbon-l'Archambault. Nonsense! France does not intend to be Americanized. There is no danger of skyscrapers appearing in Marmande or Romorantin. The French genius, you know——"

Alas! Nothing alive is invulnerable, not even the French genius. Before rising as a proud skyscraper, the new fiend gets to work at ground level. Only last month I was astounded by what the headmaster of a great Paris lycée told me: "Innumerable parents who consult me as to their sons' future," he said, "thus express their hopes: 'Our boy has average gifts. Let him take up whatever you like, so long as he has his own car by the time he is twenty-five.'"

I can understand that such parents do not express more private hopes. No doubt a good deal of nerve would be required in order to say: "I want my son to be honest, educated, persevering, and scrupulous——" But what amazes me is that their aims should be so moderate: a car at twenty-five! And after that? Does this sum up a lifetime's goal? O, virtuous parents! You really are not very ambitious!

It is true that our frantic and blatant advertising, now carried on by specialized industrialists, does everything to increase such demoralization. I cannot avoid hoping

that Clio will later call these industrialists to account, and to any compiler in quest of a job I suggest that all this corruptly seductive literature offers the makings of a side-splitting anthology.

Greatly as I should like to take another bite at such a juicy subject, I must postpone studying in all the necessary detail what an apparatus such as a telephone or a car means in the life of an ordinary man; what, for instance, a car giveth and what a car taketh away. If I have quoted the headmaster, it is because I see his words as illuminating the state of mind of a mediocre society awe-struck and blinded by the American legend. If the whole world were to be so coldly and naïvely low in expressing its aspirations, I should expect it to enter forthwith upon a steep decadence.

Hence feelings cannot be spared. One must not hesitate to speak out as loudly as one can.

As to the rapidity with which the poison is spreading, the humblest observer is able to draw on his own private recollections and from them form his own conclusions.

During 1923 I got to know a Frenchman settled in Tunisia. He was intelligent and energetic, and knew a lot about the country. Let us call him Philip.

At that time, in 1923, despite agricultural machines, and tractors, and artificial manures, Philip led a patriarchal and truly splendid life, rather like the life led by the chieftains and kings of the Bible. He welcomed his friends with a rustic splendour which the inhabitants of a modern town are scarcely able to picture. Chickens, of course, were taken from the farm-yard, and, in accordance with the African custom, a lamb from his tremendous flock was roasted whole. Cingalese zebus, which had been acclimatized, provided cream and butter. Fruit and vegetables were grown on the estate. For the evening meal we were seated on sheepskins, sheepskins which had been cured on the farm. I had the refreshing feeling that I was

still living really close to Mother Earth and that I was enjoying her own delightful and varied fruits.

In 1930, at the beginning of this same year in which I am now writing, I was again in Tunisia. I again visited Philip, and I did so with delight. He is still the same man. He still practises the same remarkable virtues. He remains the same attentive host. He came to Tunis to meet me, carried me off to his estate, and entertained me magnificently, just as before. "You will probably notice," he said, "a few small changes in our way of living, and even in our table. I no longer keep chickens. It is an absurd luxury in this country, where a farm-yard does not pay. There won't be any meshui, any roast lamb. It is several years now since I gave up sheep. No money in sheep——" "Oh, well," I answered, "we shall be able to console ourselves with your wonderful zebu's cream." "Ah," he said, "I could say a good deal about dairy-farming. I don't run a dairy any longer. We have found it better to get in, as occasion requires, tins of condensed milk. But don't be alarmed : we shall not be on short commons. I got all the ingredients of our meal in Tunis, and anyhow we have plenty of tinned stuff. Much less trouble, you know, much less. We must no longer, we can no longer, fritter away energy. I am about to give up the kitchen garden. It needs too much attention and is a costly luxury. I am growing one thing at a time. This year wheat is the fashion. We have grown nothing but wheat. One must keep up to date——"

My host frowned and added : "Moreover, everybody has done as I have. Everybody has grown wheat. I am afraid marketing won't be easy. Yes, it's not an easy game——"

A game! The cat was out of the bag. A game, and a wild, savage, and ridiculous one. A blind dash into speculation has been substituted for a free life, a life calling for ingenuity and full of variety. From 1923 to

1930—a mere seven years. In that interval the much prated rationalization has already begun to change the face of life in Africa.

Variety! There is the salt of life. In variety may be seen the supreme smile of the Old World in jeopardy. I want to go on praising the world, but a world " ondoyant et divers," a world displaying a hundred thousand facets and speaking with a hundred thousand tongues.

I have not yet got over the shock I had in the course of a conversation last winter with two young captains of industry. They belong to the East of France, they are watchmakers. They had been describing their work to me with enthusiasm. Then one said : " We must compel the public, the immense but hesitant public, to buy our good watches, for they are very good watches."

" Of course they are good," I replied. " But what can you do to encourage buyers, when, after all, the virtues of a good watch have been known for centuries ? Watch-making is not like the making of motor-cars, a novelty with which people can be driven out of their sober senses."

" Motor-cars!" said my interlocutor; " exactly. It was of motor-cars I was thinking. We have already pointed out that between a watch and a car there are many analogies. The chassis corresponds to what we call the movement. The carriage-work corresponds to the case. On the one hand, we have a hidden machinery, which does the work and wears out. On the other hand, we have a visible covering, which, being visible, is subject to the dictates of fashion. The public is already accustomed to exchanging cars every two years, every year, and even oftener. We want to get the public to exchange watches as often as one exchanges cars."

There was a pause. The eyes of both young men were shining. No doubt they expected me to agree with them, to support them.

" I see what you mean," I said, " and I am very sorry to have to dissent, and dissent vehemently. You sell

watches all over the world, but let me speak only of France. As regards my countrymen, what I venture to suggest is this. Don't say to them : 'Exchange your watch every spring as you exchange your car.' You would be showing that you were misled by deceptive resemblances. Say, rather : 'Buy one of our watches. It will last you your whole lifetime, and, if it is taken care of, will both serve and delight your descendants.' I beg you to say that, for France, I believe, is still not seriously diseased, and I feel you would be understood and would sell just as many of your excellent watches."

Naturally I have been accused of playing the detestable part of a spoil-sport. I realize one should be able to sympathize equally with nations stricken by misfortune and with nations overwhelmed by prosperity. To tell the truth, there was too little serenity about the temporal success of America, when I saw it in 1928, for me to have felt in the least covetous. I can see only two aims in life : the happiness of those I love and the satisfaction to be derived from sustained work. I might have coveted some of America's garish opulence on behalf of France and on behalf of Europe. But no, I coveted nothing, I still covet nothing. It is too obvious to me that there where a certain form of material prosperity arises, it does so at the expense of the human mind. Germany's era of great prosperity was between the two wars, 1870 to 1914; and it is to be noted that during that period Germany, which in the past had exported so many great men, produced only men of a second-rate greatness. (I do not fear that a similar fate is in store for France.)

There is one more thing to be said. I do not claim to be trying to arrest the march of the Machine Age. Of course not. I benefit by machinery as much as any one. But, on the other hand, I do my best—and I often find it difficult to do it—to remain the master of the machine and not become its awe-struck slave. In accepting to be

served by the machine, I do not forget that its service is not pure and that its benefits are often corrupt. It relieves us of one worry only to inflict upon us another.

Let me urge all who undestand me not to allow themselves to be deceived. Let me urge them to escape, day by day, through the mind and into the mind. Let me urge them to labour patiently for the salvaging from disorder, not of an absolute morality—such a morality is beyond definition—but of their own traditional morality, that accepted and necessary morality, that set of rules and principles, thanks to which they may bear calmly the metamorphoses of a delirious society, and live, in short, decently. Too many people today are as much at a loss as if life had been bereft of all meaning.

HUMBERT WOLFE

MUSIC IN SILENCE

There is also music in silence—
Those three tall women, of whom I have read,
They do not play the harp or the viol,
They let the thread trawl through their fingers
Till one leaning forward sunders it
With scissors that were dipped, I think, in the moon.
Is it nothing that the leopard in the brake
Moves quieter than the rustle of the grasses?
Is it nothing that the shadow of a bird's wing
May hover like a cloud on a cornfield,
A cloud no bigger than a bird's wing?
The roots of the flower in the silent earth,
The unborn child in the womb,
And the unguessed thought in the poet's mind—
These are three marvels, yea, I know none greater—
There is also music in silence.

E. E. CUMMINGS

TIHREE POEMS

I

When rain whom fear
not children but men
speaks (among leaves Easily
through voices womenlike telling

of death love earth dark)

and thousand
thrusts squirms stars
Trees, swift each with its

Own motion deeply deeply to wickedly

comprehend the innocently Doomed
brief all which somewhere is

fragrantly,

arrive
(when
Rain comes;
predicating forever, assuming
the laughter of afterwards—
i spirally understand

What

touching means
or What does a hand
with your hair
in my imagination

II

i met a man under the moon
on Sunday.
by way of saying
nothing he
smiled (but
just by the dirty collar of his

jacket were two glued uncarefully ears
in
that face a box o
skin lay eyes like
new tools)

whence i guessed that he also had climbed the pincian
to appreciate rome at nightfall; and because against the
wall his white sincere small
hands with their guessing fingers

did-not-move exquisitely
,like dead children
(if he had been playing a fiddle i had

been dancing : which is
why something about me reminded him of ourselves

as Nobody came slowly over the town)

III

you
in win-
ter who sit
dying thinking
huddled behind dir-
ty glass mind muddled
and cuddled by dreams (or some
times vacantly gazing through un-
washed panes into a crisp todo of
murdering uncouth faces which pass rap-
idly with their breaths.) " people are walking deaths
in this season " think " finality lives up
on them a little more openly than usual
hither, thither who briskly busily carry the as-
tonishing and spontaneous and difficult ugliness
of themselves with a more incisive simplicty a
more intensively brutal futility " And sit
huddling dumbly behind three or two partly trans-
parent panes which by some loveless trick sepa-
rate one stilled unmoving mind from a hun-
dred doomed hurrying brains (by twos
or threes which fiercely rapidly
pass with their breaths) in win-
ter you think, die slow-
ly " toc tic " as i
have seen trees (in
whose black bod-
ies leaves
hide

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

THESE MOUNTAINEERS

When I had lived in the Southwest Virginia mountains for sometime, people of the North, when I went up there, used to ask me many questions about the mountain people. They did it whenever I went to the city. You know how people are. They like to have everything ticketed.

The rich are so and so, the poor are so and so, the politicians, the people of the Western Coast. As though you could draw one figure and say—" There it is. That's it. "

The men and women of the mountains were what they were. They were people. They were poor whites. That certainly meant that they were white and poor.

Also they were mountaineers.

After the factories began to go down into this country, into Virginia, Tennessee and North Carolina, a lot of them went, with their families, to work in the factories and to live in mill towns. For a time all was peace and quiet and then strikes broke out. Everyone who reads newspapers knows about that. There was a lot of writing in newspapers about these mountain people. Some of it was pretty keen.

But there had been a lot of romancing about them before that. That sort of thing never did any one much good.

. . . . . .

So I was walking along in the mountains and had got down into what in the mountain country is called " a

hollow." I was lost. I had been fishing for trout in mountain streams and was tired and hungry. There was a road of a sort I had got into. It would have been difficult to get a car over that road. "This ought to be good whisky-making country," I thought.

In the hollow along which the road went I came to a little town. Well now, you would hardly call it a town. There were six or eight little unpainted frame houses and, at a cross-roads, a general store.

The mountains stretched away, above the poor little houses. On both sides of the road were the magnificent hills. You understand, when you have been down there, why they are called "the Blue Ridge." They are always blue, a glorious blue. What a country it must have been before the lumbermen came. Over near my place the mountain men were always talking of the spruce forests of former days. Many of them worked in the lumber camps. They speak of soft moss into which a man sank almost to the knees, the silence of the forest, the great trees.

The great forest is gone now, but the young trees are growing. Much of the country will grow nothing but timber.

The store before which I stood that day was closed, but an old man sat on a little porch in front. He said that the storekeeper also carried the mail and was out on his route, but that he would be back and open his store in an hour or two.

I had thought I might at least get some cheese and crackers or a can of sardines.

The man on the porch was old. He was an evil-looking old man. He had grey hair and a grey beard and might have been seventy, but I could see that he was a tough-bodied old fellow.

I asked my way back over the mountain to the main road and started to move off up the hollow when he called

to me. " Are you the man who has moved in here from the North and has built a house in here ? "

There is no use my trying to reproduce the mountain speech. I am not skilled at it.

The old man invited me to his house to eat. " You don't mind eating beans, do you ? " he asked.

I was hungry and would be glad to have beans. I would have eaten anything at the moment. He said he hadn't any woman, that his old woman was dead. " Come on, " he said, " I think I can fix you up. "

We went up a path, over a half mountain and into another hollow, perhaps a mile away. It was amazing. The man was old. The skin on his face and neck was wrinkled like an old man's skin and his legs and body were thin, but he walked at such a pace that to follow him kept me panting.

It was a hot still day in the hills. Not a breath of air stirred. That old man was the only being I saw that day in that town. If any one else lived there they had kept out of sight.

The old man's house was on the bank of another mountain stream. That afternoon, after eating with him, I got some fine trout out of the stream.

But this isn't a fishing story. We went to his house.

It was dirty and small and seemed about to fall down. The old man was dirty. There were layers of dirt on his old hands and on his wrinkled neck. When we had got into the house, which had but one room on the ground floor, he went to a small stove. " The fire is out, " he said. " Do you care if the beans are cold ? "

" No, " I said. By this time I did not want any beans and wished I had not come. There was something evil about this old mountain man. Surely the romancers could not have made much out of him.

Unless they played on the Southern hospitality chord. He had invited me there. I had been hungry. The beans were all he had.

He put some of them on a plate and put them on a table before me. The table was a home-made one covered with a red oil cloth, now quite worn. There were large holes in it. Dirt and grease clung about the edges of the holes. He had wiped the plate, on which he had put the beans, on the sleeve of his coat.

But perhaps you have not eaten beans prepared in the mountains, in the mountain way. They are the staff of life down there. Without beans there would be no life in some of the hills. The beans are, when prepared by a mountain woman and served hot, often delicious. I do not know what they put in them or how they cook them, but they are unlike any beans you will find anywhere else in the world.

As Smithfield ham, when it is real Smithfield ham, is unlike any other ham.

But beans cold, beans dirty, beans served on a plate wiped on the sleeve of that coat——

I sat looking about. There was a dirty bed in the room in which we sat and an open stairway, leading up to the room above.

Some one moved up there. Some one walked barefooted across the floor. There was silence for a time and then it happened again.

You must get the picture of a very hot still place between hills. It was June. The old man had become silent. He was watching me. Perhaps he wanted to see whether or not I was going to scorn his hospitality. I began eating the beans with a dirty spoon. I was many miles away from any place I had ever been before.

And then there was that sound again. I had got the impression that the old man had told me his wife was dead, that he lived alone.

How did I know it was a woman upstairs? I did know.

"Have you got a woman up there?" I asked. He

grinned, a toothless malicious grin, I thought, as though to say, " O, you're curious, eh ? "

And then he laughed, a queer cackle.

" She ain't mine, " he said.

We sat in silence after that, and then there was the sound again. I heard bare feet walking across a plank floor.

Now they were descending the crude open stairs. Two legs appeared, two thin, young girl's legs.

She didn't look to be over twelve or thirteen.

She came down, almost to the foot of the stairs, and then stopped and sat down.

How dirty she was, how thin, what a wild look she had. I have never seen a wilder looking creature. Her eyes were bright. They were like the eyes of a wild animal.

And, at that, there was something about her face. In many of these young mountain faces there is a look it is difficult to explain—it is a look of breeding, of aristocracy. I know no other word for the look.

And she had it.

And now the two were sitting there and I was trying to eat. Suppose I arose and threw the dirty beans out at the open door. I might have said, " Thanks. I have enough. " I didn't dare.

But perhaps they weren't thinking of the beans. The old man began to speak of the girl, sitting ten feet from him, as though she were not there.

" She ain't mine, " he said. " She came here. Her pop died. She ain't got any one. "

I am making a bad job of trying to reproduce his speech.

He was giggling now, a toothless old man's giggle. " Ha, she won't eat. "

" She's a hell cat, " he said.

He reached over and touched me on the arm. " You know what. She's a hell cat. You couldn't satisfy her. She had to have her a man.

" And she got one too. "

" Is she married? " I asked, half whispering the words, not wanting her to hear.

He laughed at the idea. " Ha. Married, eh? "

He said it was a young man from farther down the hollow. " He lives here with us, " the old man said laughing, and as he said it the girl arose and started back up the stairs. She had said nothing, but her young eyes had looked at us, filled with hatred. As she went up the stairs the old man kept laughing at her, his queer, high-pitched, old man's laugh. It was really a giggle. " Ha. She can't eat. When she tries to eat she can't keep it down. She thinks I don't know why. She's a hell cat. She would have a man and now she's got one.

" Now she can't eat. Her stomach won't hold any food. "

. . . . . .

I fished in the creek in the hollow during the afternoon and toward evening began to get trout. They were fine ones. I got fourteen of them and got back over a mountain and into the main road before dark.

. . . . . .

What took me back into the hollow I don't know. The face of the girl haunted me.

And then there was good trout fishing there. That stream at least had not been fished out.

When I went back I put a twenty dollar bill in my pocket. " Well, " I thought--I hardly know what I did think. There were notions in my head of course.

The girl was very, very young.

" She might have been kept there by that old man, " I thought, " and by some young mountain rough. There might be a chance for her. "

I thought I would give her the twenty dollars. "If she wants to get out perhaps she can," I thought. Twenty dollars is a lot of money in the hills.

. . . . . .

It was just such another hot day when I got in there again and the old man was not at home. At first I thought there was no one there. The house stood alone by a hardly discernible road and near the creek. The creek was clear and had a swift current. It made a chattering sound. I stood on the bank of the creek before the house and tried to think.

"If I interfere—"

Well, let's admit it. I was a bit afraid. I thought I had been a fool to come back.

. . . . . .

And then the girl suddenly came out of the house and came toward me. There was no doubt about it. She was that way.

And unmarried of course.

At least my money, if I could give it to her, would serve to buy her some clothes. The ones she had on were very ragged and dirty. Her feet and legs were bare. It would be winter by the time the child was born.

A man came out of the house. He was a tall young mountain man. He looked rough. "That's him," I thought. He said nothing.

He was dirty and unkempt, as the old man had been and as the child was.

At any rate she was not afraid of me. "Hello, you are back here," she said. Her voice was clear.

Just the same I saw the hatred in her eyes. I asked about the fishing. "Are the trout biting?" I asked. She had come nearer me now and the young man had slouched back into the house.

Again I am at a loss about how to reproduce her moun-

tain speech. It is peculiar. So much is in the voice.

Hers was cold and clear and filled with hatred.

"How should I know? He" (indicating with a gesture of her hand the tall slouching figure who had gone into the house) "is too damn lazy to fish.

"He is too damn lazy for anything on earth."

She was glaring at me.

"Well," I thought, "I will at least try to give her the money." I took the bill in my hand and held it toward her. "You will need some clothes," I said. "Take it and buy yourself some clothes."

It may have been that I had touched her mountain pride. How am I to know? The look of hatred in her eyes seemed to grow more intense.

"You go to hell," she said. "You get out of here.

"And don't you come back in here again."

She was looking hard at me when she said this. If you have never known such people, who live like that, "on the outer fringe of life," as we writers say (you may see them sometimes in the tenement districts of cities as well as in the lonely and lovely hills)—such a queer look of maturity in the eyes of a child——

It sends a shiver through you. Such a child knows too much and not enough. Before she went back into the house she turned and spoke to me again. It was about my money.

She told me to put it somewhere, I won't say where. The most modern of modern writers has to use some discretion.

Then she went into the house. That was all. I left. What was I to do? After all a man looks after his hide. In spite of the trout, I did not go fishing in that hollow again.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

THE WEAKNESS OF HERMAN MELVILLE*

Concretely Herman Melville touched the life of his age and country at a thousand points. Yet he chose flight and fancy. He fled to paradises in which he never wholly believed, projected the malevolence of the universe, which rose to him from his hopeless inner conflicts, in a vast and ghostly symbol, and finally, still uneased of his pain, poured forth in " Pierre " the confused contents of his aching soul. The quality of American life had little to do with the character of his work, any more than the quality of German life had to do with that of Hoffmann, or the quality of French life with the torments and visions of Baudelaire.

In the study and interpretation of the arts we can dismiss, in respect of the individual's possibility of expression, his special approach to it, the pressure of environment. Every age and land is the right age and land for creative expression. The man may starve. He will speak if he can. Thus Melville and our other romancers, belated in the age of Dickens and Thackeray, of George Eliot and Flaubert, were romancers because they were hopelessly imprisoned in their unconscious conflicts. They could not pour these into real experience, which they never reached. Unable to face life, they built structures of dream and phantasmagoria in which to dwell, into which to flee from the intolerable exactions of the

*From a critical survey of American literature which will be published by Messrs. Harper and Brothers, New York.

normal world. They feared death and yet dwelt upon it without ceasing. " The fever called ' Living ' " high and throbbing, was all Melville knew of life.

The demon that pursued him has been revealed, a little hesitantly, but clearly enough, by the researches of Professor R. M. Weaver. Left fatherless at thirteen, Melville, with an overpowering fixation on his mother, expressed, almost to the point of actual insight, in " Pierre, " found in that cold and handsome lady no response to his consciously, of course, filial ardour. He thought of himself as doubly orphaned and began to hate a world to him empty, cruel and loveless. He repressed his intolerably jealous hatred of his father and substituted for it a defensive idealization. This common device of neurotics broke down in later years, and in " Pierre " the face that haunted him—" too familiar, yet inexplicable, " that face " backward hinting of some irrevocable sin "—this face " compounded so of hell and heaven, " " is the instrument by which the memory of Pierre's father is desecrated. "

From his adolescence on, then, the world was a homeless and an empty place and his soul cast out and orphaned. A " sort of Ishmael, " he calls himself in " Redburn, " and adds : " Talk not of the bitterness of middle-age... a boy can feel all that and much more, when upon his young soul the mildew has fallen... And never again can such blights be made good... they strike in too deep. " Ishmael he remained even to the ominous opening of " Moby Dick, " questing forever after the mother-image, called Yillah from the " island of delight " in " Mardi, " invoked in many moods in " Pierre " : " *Who* art thou ? " " Take thy thin fingers from mé; I am affianced and not to thee! " The incest imagery haunts him, even as it haunted Shelley. But he found release in neither art nor life.

At seventeen he fled from home and went to sea. Inevitably ! " Such flight-like breaking of familial ties, "

an eminent psychologist writes, "is a typical reaction toward an overpowering fixation, and almost always marks the beginning of an artistic career." * And Melville was destined to flee again and again, if not to Europe, if not always to the South Seas, then at least away from life, from reality and outward experience, from the world which had so early disappointed and blighted his soul.

What is the pertinence of this analysis of Melville, for the objective exactness of which all proofs from his own life and works, from clinical material and from the revelations of other artists, are now accessible? It accounts for the fragmentary, chaotic, explosive and unguided character of all his work. The rounded work of art speaks of complete projection of the inner urgency, speaks of catharsis and control. More clearly than ever, we now perceive that the great artist is also the man of strong and valiant character, no Bohemian and eccentric and vagrant; we see why Shakespeare retired with a comfortable fortune and built him a house, and Milton and Goethe were servants of their states. The analysis has another purpose and use. It accounts for the atmosphere of all of Melville's books—that atmosphere of homelessness and emptiness, that desolateness of the heart which is present even in the paradisal valleys of the Marquesas, which makes one shiver in "Redburn"; which rises to a wild, despairing cry in "Moby Dick", and which is not absent even from the simpler and saner narrative of "Israel Potter." The final image that arises from all of Melville's work is that of a big-bearded, violently excited man, trying to shout down the whimpering, lonely child in his soul.

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* Dr. Otto Rank, to whose *Das Inzest Motiv: Grundzüge einer Psychologie des dichterischen Schaffens* (2nd ed., 1926) I am profoundly indebted, as all of literary criticism is bound increasingly to be.

It will be seen at once that I consider the recent re-estimate of Melville to have somewhat overshot the mark. Great wits have praised him, but not, perhaps, those of most balanced judgement. He has his superb moments. But are those moments not rare, and do they wholly repay the labour necessary to reach them? A younger generation, in search of that "usable" American past, which Van Wyck Brooks so earnestly and sagaciously demanded long ago, has fastened its flag to his mast. Has not that generation been both deceived and self-deceived? Has it not substituted its desire and ideal for the reality? Melville was not a strong man, defying the cruel order of the world; he was a weak man, fleeing from his own soul and from life, a querulous man, a fretful man. It did not take reality—suffering, injustice, disease, poverty, public outrage or private wrong—to disillusion him. His life, as the lives of artists go, was not unfortunate. He was disillusioned from the beginning. He adopted all his life the regressive attitude of the neurotic—of the favourite child who wants the world to re-constitute for it the conditions of the nursery. Is that not evident even in "Moby Dick"? Much-tried Prometheus does not defy the gods with that mad, sick violence, nor does he interrupt his defiance with babble about the brains of the sperm-whale being accounted a fine dish.

The South Sea books, which first brought Melville into public notice, hold up remarkably well. There are enough pages of sober narrative and description in both "Typee" and "Omoo" to satisfy a strong natural curiosity concerning the state of those islands before the so-called "civilizing" and also sentimentalizing process had gone too far. Melville saw the Marquesas now nearly a hundred years ago, and that very fact, coupled with the undoubted vigour of his writing, tells in his favour. This holds good despite the fact that Melville himself had no scientific curiosity. The language of the islands is to him "unintelligible and stunning gibberish," it gives

him " a headache for the rest of the day "; he really made no effort to understand the nature of taboo or to enter into the psychical processes of the islanders. They are mere " natives " to him; they annoy him; he is happy only when the valley is a substitute for life and a defence against it for him—a Paradise into which to flee. His attitude in " Omoo " is more objective and more manly. He brings his mind to bear on facts and conditions and abuses. His criticism of the missionaries is strong and sagacious, and probably took courage in 1848. In no other book is Melville so tolerable a companion, so free of fretfulness and mere spleen. Yet both " Typee " and " Omoo " are somehow morose books—books, like all of Melville's, without charm, which is a mark of harmony, without sweetness, which is a mark of strength. Fayaway is not beautiful in the memory nor is the valley. The books, I repeat, are morose, not sombre; hard, not severe. Yet, that they are readable and are read today at all is a tribute which no critic dare underestimate.

It is not necessary to linger over the minor works. " Mardi " and " Pierre " are sheer phantasmagorias, clinical material rather than achieved literature. " Redburn " is the story of a boy who runs away to sea—the boy Melville, of course. It is strong where Melville is always strong: in the delineation of sordid and meaningless suffering, physical pain and humiliation. It is weak in characterization, in inner and outer form. It is distinctly inferior to R. H. Dana's contemporary " Two Years before the Mast. " Not without curious interest is the late " Israel Potter. " But in this book Melville leaned heavily upon the actual memoirs of a soldier of the American Revolution, and submitted a good deal to the corrective and discipline of historic fact. He nevertheless makes John Paul Jones an image of his own wild and weak rebelliousness. In the chapters on Benjamin Franklin in Paris, however, and in those that describe the battle between the Bonhomme Richard and

the British frigate Serapis, he achieves both his most human piece of characterization and his best sustained and most attractive piece of descriptive writing.

There remains "Moby Dick," which is today acclaimed a masterpiece. But masterpieces, it has been pointed out, have invariably in them an ultimate spirit of reconciliation, either, in former ages, to the universe, or, in modern times, to the suffering but not overwhelmed spirit of man. This fact, capable of empiric proof by the examination of universally recognized masterpieces, has very definite psychological and philosophical causes. Great works, furthermore, even great works of the second order like "The Scarlet Letter," or (still to stick to Melville's contemporaries) Emerson's "Essays," have a continuously or almost continuously high quality of execution, which carries one along even when the matter fails.

The comparison has been made between "Moby Dick" and "Pantagruel," evidently by those unacquainted with Rabelais in the original. For Rabelais has a continuous beauty and liquid flow of speech that does not leave him, even in his coarsest passages, such as that at the end of the fourth book. The Frenchman is always ripe and rich and self-contained; the American is raw and over-eager and ill at ease. The eloquence in "Moby Dick" is fierce and broken, and sags every other minute into sheer jejune maundering or insufferable wordiness. The grandiose and the trivial are never far apart.

There are things of a rich and memorable quaintness in "Moby Dick," such as the sermon in the Whalemen's chapel; there are passages that have the epic touch, such as that on the hunters of Nantucket; there are brief unforgettable images, such as that of "moody stricken Ahab with a crucifixion in his face in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe"; there is occasionally a concentrated energy of speech, as in those words of Ahab: "I see in him outrageous strength, with an

inscrutable malice sinewing it"; there is, at least once, a noble pathos in the description of Queequeg's death: "An awe that cannot be named would steal over you as you sat by the side of this waning savage, and saw as strange things in his face, as any beheld who were bystanders when Zoroaster died"; there is, finally, toward the end, a passage of no ignoble intensity through which Melville expresses with extreme concentration the pride of his peculiar woe. Yet it must be pointed out that in prose of the first order one can never, as here, pick out pentameters:

> kindly diffused through feebler men's whole lives...
> great hearts sometimes condense to one deep pang...
> though summary in each one suffering...

Such are the finest things in "Moby Dick." It were generous to admit that they constitute one fourth of that long book; it is certainly indisputable that of the rest what is not sound and fury merely is inchoate and dull. What, in fact, has caught the imagination of a not unreasonably pessimistic age is that greatly conceived symbolism and allegory: Man under the name of Ahab scours the endless and overwhelming seas to hunt down that White Whale in which is concentrated all the blind malevolence of the desolate universe. He finds the Whale, and the Whale destroys him and his men. The evil of the universe has triumphed.... Such, by the way, was not quite the ultimate conclusion of this Ishmael, who was "not so much bound to any haven ahead as rushing from all havens astern." In the late verses of "Clarel", which often have a mellower and more human quality than his prose, he speaks of real things, of the dangers of Democracy creating "an Anglo-Saxon China"; of "the impieties of 'Progress'," which is a great phrase, and so, facing realities and not only the demon within, he strikes at last the central human note:

> *This world clean fails me:* still I yearn...

No, Melville is not even a minor master. His works constitute rather one of the important curiosities of literature. He will be chiefly remembered as the inventor of a sombre legend concerning the evil that is under the sun. But to embody this legend in a permanently valid form he had only half the creative power and none of the creative discipline or serenity.

RHYS DAVIES

BLODWEN

"Pugh Jibbons is at the back door," cried Blodwen's mother from upstairs. "Go and get four pounds of peas."

A sulky look came to Blodwen's face for a moment. She hated going out to Pugh Jibbons to buy vegetables; she couldn't bear his insolent looks. Nevertheless, after glancing in the kitchen mirror, she walked down the little back garden and opened the door that led into the waste land behind the row of houses.

A small cart, with a donkey in the shafts, stood there piled high with vegetables. Pugh Jibbons—the son of old Pugh Jibbons, so called because he always declared that Jibbons (that being the local name for spring-onions) cured every common ailment in man—leaned against the cart waiting for her. This was almost a daily occurrence.

He did not greet her. He looked at her steadily, as she stood under the lintel of the door, a slight flush in her cheeks, and ordered, in a harsh voice of contempt:

"Four pounds of peas!"

Pugh Jibbons grinned. He was a funny-looking fellow. A funny fellow. Perhaps there was a gipsy strain in him. He was of the Welsh who have not submitted to industrialism, Nonconformity and imitation of the English. He looked as though he had issued from a cave in the mountains. He was swarthy and thick-set, with rounded powerful limbs and strong dark tufts of hair everywhere. Winter and summer he bathed in the river, and lived in a tiny house away up on the

mountain-side, near to the lower slope where his allotment of vegetables was. His father, with whom he lived, was now old and vague and useless; the jibbons had not kept him his senses; and his mother was dead. They had always lived a semi-wild life on the mountain-side, earning a bit of money selling their vegetables, which were good and healthy, in the Valley below.

" Coming to an end they are now, " he said, weighing the peas, but keeping his eye on her, which he winked whenever her disdainful glance came round to him. But she would look into the distance beyond him.

There was usually a box of flowers on the cart. Today there were bunches of pinks in it. He took one out. She held out her apron for the peas and he shovelled them into it, placing the bunch of pinks on the top. Nearly always he would thrust a bunch of flowers on her. Usually she took them. But today she didn't want to. She wanted to tell him something. She said :

" Take those flowers back. " Her colour came up, she arched her beautiful thick neck, her eyes blazed out on him. " And if you keep on following me about the streets at night I'll set the police on you, I warn you. Where's your decency, man ? " And then she wanted to slam the door in his face and hurry away. But she waited, looking at him menacingly.

His mouth remained open for a moment or two after her outburst, comically, his eyes looking at her with startled examination. Then he pushed his cap to the back of his head, thrust out his face aggressively and demanded :

" Is that bloke that goes about with you your fellow then ? "

Her disdainful face lifted, she rapped out, " Something unpleasant to say to you that fellow will have, if you don't watch out, you rude lout. "

Then he became mocking and teasing again, his eyes sharp with wickedness. " He's not a bloke for you,

well you know that," he said daringly. "Toff as he is and tall and elegant, he's not a bloke for you. I know him and I know the family out of what he comes. There's no guts to any of his lot. Haw-haw and behave politely and freeze yourself all up. There's no juice and no seed and no marrow and no bones to him. Oswald Vaughan! Haw-haw." And screwing up his face to a caricature of a toff's expression, he stood before her undismayed and mocking, his short thick legs apart and almost bandy.

"You..." she muttered, raging, "...You wait. You'll be sorry for this." She slammed the door and hurried to the kitchen.

The unspeakable ruffian! What right had he to talk of Oswald like that. And "He's not a bloke for you, well you know that!" Impudence. Pugh Jibbons, some one they bought vegetables from! Why, however had it happened? To have a ruffian of a stranger talk of her affairs like that.

She threw the peas out of her apron on the table. The bunch of pinks was among them. She trembled with anger. She had intended throwing them back at him. She ought never to have accepted flowers from him before. He was always shoving a bunch of flowers in her hands or sticking them among the vegetables. Never again. She'd throw his flowers back at him. These pinks she had a good mind to put in the fire.

But they smelled so sweet and they were so delicate, she couldn't throw them away. She lifted her arm for a vase. Her shape was splendid. She was a fine handsome young woman of twenty-five, all her body wholesome and well-jointed, with fine movements, unconsciously proud and vehement. Her face, when she was silent and alone, was often sullen. But always it had a glow. She was a virgin. Her sister was married, her father was check-weight man in the colliery, her mother was always urging her to wed.

Oswald Vaughan, the son of the local solicitor, had

been courting her for some months now. He was in his father's office and his family was one of the most respected in the place, big Chapel people. He was the smartest man in the Valley, with his London clothes and little knick-knacks. Both father and son read big books with owl-like gravity and indeed they were very clever, in their minds. Very brainy.

Oswald courted Blodwen with great devotion. He came to her as though to a meal. He himself said he was hungry for women. He would sit with her in the parlour of her home and hold her hands tightly or hug her shoulders with a lingering pressure. He respected her and, believing her to be intelligent, he brought books of verse and read her Wordsworth and Tennyson, especially the latter's *In Memoriam*, of which he had a profound admiration. When he left her he was refreshed and walked home in an ecstasy. Blodwen would go to the kitchen for supper and, oddly enough, something would be sure to irritate her always, either something wrong with the food or she took offence at some observation of her mother or father. She was a difficult girl really.

Her anger against Pugh Jibbons persisted as she went about the duties of the day. If there had been a stick near, as he had mocked at her that morning, she would have laid it about him. It was the only way to treat a man of his kind. She was quite capable of giving him a good sound beating with a strong stick. The low-down ruffian. And her anger had not abated even by the time Oswald called that evening. She went into the parlour, her eyes glittering with bad temper.

Oswald sat opposite her and laid his clean yellow gloves on his knee. His face was pale and narrow, with a frugal nose and pale steady eyes. "You're looking very wicked and naughty this evening, my dear. That's no way to receive your young man."

Her eyes gleamed, but she stared away from him through the window. He went on :

" You know, I always think a woman should never be anything but bright and happy when her men-folk are about. That's her duty in life——"

" Let's go out, " Blodwen interjected. " I feel I must have some fresh air this evening. "

He sighed. But he was submissive, much as he wanted to stay in the parlour and caress her. He began to draw on his gloves.

" We'll go to the pictures if you like, " he said. He was very fond of going to the cinema with her. Nothing he liked better than sitting in the warm, florid atmosphere of the cinema, pressing Blodwen's hand and watching a love film.

" I'd rather go for a walk, " she answered, turning her sparkling eyes on him fully.

" There's so few walks about here, " he sighed.

" There's the mountains, " she said.

She liked going up the mountains. He didn't. Not many people went up the mountains : they had been there all their lives and seemed not of much account, and dull to walk on. Great bare flanks of hills.

" All right, " he said, getting up and looking in the mirror over the mantel to put his tie straight. Blodwen went out to put on her hat and fur.

As they went down the street, the neighbours looked at them appraisingly. Everybody said what a picture they looked, the picture of a happy couple. He with his tall slim elegance and she with her healthy wholesome-looking body, her well-coloured face, they seemed so suitably matched to wed. His fine superiority and breeding wed to her wild fecund strength. They looked such a picture walking down the street, it did the heart good to see it.

They crossed the brook that ran, black with coal-dust, beneath some grubby unkempt alders and climbed a straggling path at the rocky base of the hills. Presently Oswald remarked :

" You're very quiet this evening. "

Then there came to her eyes a little malicious glow. He had taken her arm and was gazing down at her fondly —even though, as the path became steeper, he began to breathe heavily, almost in a snort. She said :

" I've been upset today. "

" What was it, my dear ? " he asked soothingly.

" You know that man called Pugh Jibbons, the son of old Jibbons, who sells vegetables in a donkey-cart ? "

" Yes, of course. Everybody knows him. They're a fine rough lot, that family. Half-wild. "

" Well, he molests me. "

" Molests you! " Oswald exclaimed. " Attacked you, you mean ? " His mouth remained open in astonishment and horror.

" Oh, no. Not attacked me. But he bothers me and follows me about. And this morning I was buying vegetables from him at our back door and he said—Oh, he said some rude things. "

" Does he follow you about in the streets, make himself a nuisance to you ? " Oswald demanded sternly, the young solicitor.

" Yes, he does, " she said angrily.

" Then, " said Oswald, " we'll send him a warning letter. I can't have you being bothered like this. The rapscalion. I'll put a stop to him. I'll have a letter sent him tomorrow.

" Will you! " she said.

" Of course. That's where I come in useful for you. A solicitor's letter will frighten him, you'll see. "

" Perhaps, " she said after a moment or two, " you'd better leave it for a time. Nothing serious is there to complain of. And I told him myself this morning, I warned him. So we'll wait perhaps. "

She persuaded him, after some debate, that it would be better to postpone the sending of the letter.

Not until they got to the mountain top, did she seem to

regain her good spirits. She loved the swift open spaces of the mountain tops. They sat beneath a huge grey stone that crouched like an elephant in a dip of the uplands, which billowed out beneath them in long lithe declivities. They could see all the far-flung valley between the massive different hills. Some of those hills were tall and suave and immaculate, having escaped the desecration of the coal-mines; others were rounded and squat like the wind-blown skirt of a gigantic woman, some were shapeless with great excrescences of the mines, heaps of waste matter piled up black and forbidding; others were small and young and helpless, crouching between their bulked brothers. Blodwen felt eased, gazing at the massed hills stretched along the fourteen miles of the valley. She felt eased and almost at peace again. Oswald glanced at her and saw she wanted to be quiet, though the storm had left her brow. He sat back against the rock and musingly fingered his heavy gold watch chain. He did not care for the mountain tops himself. It was dull up there : and he seemed to be lost in the ample space.

He couldn't bear the silence for very long. He had to say something. He couldn't bear her looking away, so entranced in some world of her own.

" A penny for them, " he said, touching her shoulder lightly.

She gave a sudden start and turned wondering eyes to him. And her eyes were strange to him, as though she did not know him. They were blue and deep as the sea, and old and heavy, as though with the memory of lost countries. She did not speak, only looked at him in startled wonder. One would have thought a stranger had touched her and spoken.

" It's fine up here, " she said.

But she was so different and not the human Blodwen that he knew in the parlour or the cinema. He couldn't warm himself with her at all. Her body seemed rigid

and unyielding in his caress. She was hard and barren and profitless as these mountain-tops.

He considered the evening wasted and a failure, as they descended the mountain in the grey-blue light. And he was hungry to hold her, to feel the strong living substance of her body. His face became almost pathetic in its desire. But somehow he could not penetrate the subtle atmosphere of aloofness that she wrapped herself in. He kept on sighing, in the hope that she would notice it. Women were very funny and beyond a man's understanding.

She did not ask him into the house, but lifted her lips to him, her eyes shut, inside the gateway of the garden. In a sudden spurt of anger he pecked quickly at her mouth and withdrew. She opened her eyes and they seemed unfathomable as the night sky. They both waited in silence for a few moments and then, lowering her head, she said calmly :

" Good-night, Oswald. "

" Good-night, Blodwen. "

He lifted his bowler hat and turned resolutely away.

She went in, slowly and meditatively. Her face was calm and thoughtful. She still had the clear exalted peace of the high spaces of the hill-tops. But she was aware of Oswald and his dissatisfaction. She couldn't help it. There were times now and again when his limp and clumsy love-making affronted her, as there were times when it amused her and when it roused her to gentle tenderness. After all, he was young : only twenty-five. Married, she would soon change him and mould him, surely she would ? She wondered. Married, things would be different. She'd have to settle down. Surely Oswald was the ideal husband to settle down with. She would have a well-ordered life with no worries of money or work. Oswald would have his father's practice and become a moderately wealthy man : and his family had position. Had always been of the best class in the place.

Different from her family, for her grandfather had been an ordinary collier and even now they were neither working- nor upper-class. Her mother was so proud of the step-up marriage to Oswald would mean : she had already bought several things on the strength of it—a new parlour set of furniture, a fur coat and odd things like a coffee-set and silver napkin-rings and encylopaedias and leather books of poetry. It would be a lovely showy wedding too.

But she wished she didn't have that curious empty feeling in her when she thought of it all, sometimes. Not always. Sometimes she realized Oswald's virtues and deeply respected him for them : good-manners, breeding, smartness, a knowledge of international affairs and languages, a liking for verse. Yet she knew and feared that void of emptiness in her when she thought of all that marriage with him implied.

The next morning she remembered Pugh Jibbons and how angry she had been with him yesterday. What he wanted now was a good rude snub and she'd give it him that morning. And thinking of him, her blood began to run faster again. She'd never heard of such impudence. Anybody would think she had encouraged him at some time or other. That riff-raff!

When she heard his shout in the back-lane she asked her mother what vegetables they wanted and sauntered up the garden to the door.

" Morning, " said Pugh, looking at her with just a suspicion of mockery in his face. " And how's the world using you today then ? "

Statuesque, with that insulting ignoring of a person that a woman can assume, she did not hear his greeting and ordered peremptorily :

" Three pounds of beans and six of potatoes. "

" Proud we are this morning, " he observed.

He stood before her and looked at her directly, unmoving. She began to flush and arch her neck, she

looked beyond him, to the right, to the left, and then her glance came back to him. His smile was subtle and profound, the light in his gleaming dark eyes was ancient and shrewd. She wanted to turn and hurry away, slam the door on him. But she didn't. His swarthy face, with its dark gipsy strain, was full of a knowledge that she sensed rather than saw. His head rested deliberately and aggressively on his powerful neck. Suddenly she ejaculated furiously :

" Don't stare at me like that! D'you hear! Where's your manners? What right have you to stand there staring at me! "

" You know what right I have, " he answered.

" I know, do I! I warn you, Pugh Jibbons, not to molest me. "

" Suppose, " he answered, a thin wiry grin coming to to his face, " that Oswald Vaughan would have something to say and do about it! "

Her anger flowed up again. " What right have you, " she demanded again, " to interfere with me? Never have I encouraged you. Haven't you any decency, man? You're nothing to me. " And then she was angry with herself for submitting to his advances to the point of discussion, instead of maintaining a haughty aloofness. She couldn't understand why she had given way to him so easily.

He looked at her. All his body and face seemed tense, gathered up to impose themselves on her consciousness.

" I figure it out, " he said, " that I've got a right to *try* and have you. Because I want you. You're a woman for me. And I think I'm a man for you. That's what I think. I could do for you what you want and I want. That's what I feel. "

She stared at him. Her face had become proud and high now : she had got control of herself. But she couldn't snub him in the harsh final way she had intended. She said, haughtily :

" I don't want to hear any more about this. Give me the beans and potatoes, please. "

Pugh Jibbons came a step nearer to her. " You come to me one evening, " he said. And his eyes were gleaming out on her in a command. " You come to me one evening and a talk we'll have over this. I promise to respect you. I've got more to tell you about yourself than you think. "

She drew back. " Ha, " she exclaimed with fine derision, " what a hope you've got! Are you going to give me the beans and potatoes or not? "

He looked her over and then immediately became the vegetable man. He weighed out the beans and potatoes. Aloofly she watched him, her face stern. Today there were bunches of wide flat marguerites in the flower-box at the front of the cart. He took out a bunch.

" I don't want the flowers, thank you, " she said coldly.

" Nay, " he said, " you must take them. You're one of my best regular customers. "

" I don't want the flowers, " she repeated, looking at him stonily.

He tossed the bunch back into the box.

" Silly wench, " he said.

" Don't you call me names! " she turtled up again. " You deserve them, " he said. Then he looked her over with desiring appreciation. " But a handsome beauty you are, by God, a handsome beauty. Different from the chits of today. You're one of the women out of the old world, that's what you are. Pah, but your mind is stupid, because you won't be what you want to be, only like the chits. "

She quivered : and her anger had become strange in her blood, rather like fear. She could find nothing to say to him, she turned, slammed the door and hurried with the vegetables to the kitchen.

Her mother looked at her with ill-temper. The mother was a tall vigorous woman. But her face had gone tart

and charmless with the disillusion frequent in working women whose lives have been nothing but a process of mechanical toil and efforts to go one better than their neighbours. She too in her day had had her violencies. But her strength had gone to sinew and hard muscle. Even now she cracked brazil nuts with her teeth, heaved a hundredweight of coal from cellar to kitchen, and could tramp twenty miles over the hills on bank-holidays. Now she distrusted the world and wanted security for herself and her daughters.

"What's the matter with you, girl!" she demanded irritably, as Blodwen sat silent over the midday meal. "Shift that sulky look off your face."

Blodwen did not answer. But her mouth sneered unpleasantly.

"You look at me like that, you shifty slut," the mother exclaimed angrily, "you'll leave this table."

The daughter got up and swept out of the room. Her head was turtled up, fearless as an enraged turkey.

"Ach," shouted the mother after her, "don't you dare show that ugly face to me again, or grown-up or not you'll feel the weight of my hand. Out with you."

But Blodwen had dignity, sweeping out of the room, and her silence was powerful with contempt and hate.

"Bringing a girl up," muttered the mother to herself, "to snarl and insult one, as though she's what-not or the Queen of England. Ach, that she was ten years younger. I'd give her what-for on that b.t.m. of hers. The stuck-up insulting girl that she is."

Blodwen stayed in her bedroom for the rest of the day, knitting. At six-thirty Oswald called. Blodwen came down to the parlour, still a little sulky. But her eyes had gone mysterious and sad again. There was anxiety on Oswald's face as he greeted her. She had frightened him last night. And now he couldn't live without her: she was the sole reality in his life.

" My dear, " he murmured, pressing her hand, " my own dear. "

She actually smiled up at him, wanly.

" Are you better ? " he asked gently.

She sat beside him on the sofa. And presently she asked :

" Oswald, when shall we get married ? "

He started excitedly. Before, he had never been able to make her decide anything definite about their marriage. She had always dismissed the subject, declaring there was plenty of time yet. He wanted to get married quickly, so that he could proceed to entire happiness with this fine woman : he wanted it quickly.

" My darling, " he cried gratefully, " my sweet, as soon as you like. I could be ready in a month. There's a house going on Salem Hill and I've got the money for furniture. "

She looked at him with haunted eyes. " Not a month," she said slowly, " perhaps we want more than a month to prepare."

" Six weeks then," he said.

" Soon," she said, in a curious kind of surging voice, " soon. Let it be soon. Six weeks! That will be soon enough." Her hand crept up his arm, the numbness in her face was breaking, her eyes filled with tears. " Oh, you do want to marry, don't you, Oswald ? "

" My dear," he cried in pain. " How strange you are! "

She put her face to his to be kissed. Their mouths met. She clung to him desperately.

And she would not go out to buy vegetables off Pugh Jibbons again. She told her mother how he molested her. The mother went to the back-door and roundly denounced the young hawker. Pugh had laughed at her. And Oswald again offered to have a letter sent him.

The weeks went by : autumn came on. There were endless preparations for the wedding. Blodwen, it was true,

took little interest in them. She allowed Oswald to arrange and buy everything. She was very calm; and her manner and behaviour changed. She lost her high-flown demeanour, she never lost her temper, and her face went a little wan. Now her dark blue eyes seemed deeper and more remote beneath her long brows, and her mouth was flower-soft, red as a geranium, but drooped.

The week before the wedding there was a touch of winter in the air. Blodwen liked the winter. She was as strong as a bear amid the harsh winds and the wild snow and the whips of rain that winter brings to the vales of the hills. She took on added strength in the winter, like a bear.

And one early evening as the wind lashed down through the serried rows of houses huddled in the vale she stood looking out at the hills from an upstairs window of her home. The grey sky was moving and violent over the brown mountains, and the light of evening was flung out like a cry. Her soul crouched within her as though in dread. But her face was lifted like an eager white bird to the hills. She would have to go, she could not stay in the house any longer. She entirely forgot that Oswald was due in a few minutes.

She wound a heavy woollen scarf round her neck and, unknown to her mother and father, who were in the kitchen, she let herself out. And blindly, seeing no one and nothing in the streets, she went on towards the base of the lonely mountains. Slowly the light died into the early wintry evening, the heavens were misted and darkened, moved slower, though in the west a dim exultance of coppery light still loitered.

Her nostrils dilated in the sharp air, but her limbs thrilled with a fierce warmth. Her feet sank in the withering mignonette-coloured grass of the lower slopes and she climbed lithely and easily the steep pathless little first hill. She was concious of Pugh Jibbon's allotments surrounding his ramshackle stone house to the left, but

she did not look at them. He, however, saw her, rising from his hoeing of potatoes.

The night would soon come. She cared nothing. She wanted to be on the dominant mountain-tops, she wanted to see the distant hills ride like great horses through the darkening misty air. She quickened her steps and her breasts began to heave with the exertion. She had crossed the smaller first hill and was ascending the big lusty mountain behind it. She was quite alone on the hills.

The black jagged rocks that jutted out on the brow of the mountain were like a menace. She began to laugh, shaking out her wild blonde hair; she unwound her scarf and bared her hot throat to the sharp slap of the wind. She would like to dance on the mountain-top, she would like to shake her limbs and breasts until they were hard and lusty as the wintry earth. And she forgot her destination in the world below.

She had reached the top. Night was not yet; and out of the grey seas of mist the distant hills rode like horses. She saw thick massive limbs, gigantic flanks and long ribbed sides of hills. She saw plunging heads with foam at their mouths. She saw the great bodies of the hills and in her own body she knew them.

. . . . . .

Oswald sat in the parlour with Blodwen's mother. The gas had been lit and a tiny fire burned in the paltry grate. Oswald looked distracted. He had been waiting over an hour already. It was most strange. It had been a definite arrangement for him to see Blodwen that evening. There were important things to discuss for the wedding on Saturday. Her mother could offer no explanation, but kept on repeating angrily :

" Why didn't she say she was going out! The provoking girl. "

" Can't you think where she has gone to ? " Oswald asked more than once.

" No. Most secretive she's been lately. Secretive and funny. I've put it down to the fuss of preparing. A serious job it is for a girl to prepare for marriage. Some it makes hystercial, some silly and others secretive and funny, like Blodwen. "

" Have you noticed it too! " exclaimed Oswald. " I've wondered what's the matter with her. But, as you say, it's such a big change for a girl to get married, she must lose her balance now and again. "

" Especially a highly-strung girl like Blodwen," said the mother. " For highly-strung she is, though in health as strong as a horse. No trouble of ailments have I had with her. From a baby she has trotted about frisky as a pony. " And to try and soothe him she added gravely: " Do you well she will, Oswald, a big satisfaction you'll have out of her. And in house matters she can work like a black and cook like a Frenchie; she can make quilts and eiderdowns and wine, and she can cure boils and gripe and other things by herbs as I have cured them in my own husband. Taught her all my old knowledge I have. A girl she is such as you don't see often nowadays. Highly-strung she might be, but handled properly, docile as a little pet mare she'll be."

" I think we get on all right," said Oswald nervously, " though no doubt we'll have our ups and downs. "

" Ay," said the mother.

The clock ticked away. Oswald kept on glancing at it mournfully, then at his watch, to make sure that *was* the time. The mother looked at him with a sort of admiring bliss in her eyes. He was such a toff and belonged to such a family. Fancy her Blodwen marrying into the Vaughan family! No wonder she was an envied mother, and people were deferential to her now. She who had been a cook at one time.

" Wherever can she be! " he repeated, sighing.

"I can't think at all," said Blodwen's mother, sharpening her voice to sympathize with his agitation. "But I'll tell her of this tonight, I'll tell her, never fear."

"Oh don't, please," he begged. "We must be gentle with her the next few days, we must put up with her whims." He looked at her appealingly and added: "No doubt she'll have a reasonable explanation when she arrives back."

. . . . . .

But Pugh Jibbons, in his old stony house on the hillside, was laying a flower on the white hillock of her belly, with tender exquisite touch a wide flat white marguerite flower, its stalk bitten off, his mouth pressing it into her rose-white belly, laughing.

Drawing, *by Michael Baxte*

JOHN COLLIER

"OH SOUL BE CHANG'D INTO LITTLE WATER DROPS"

Forster has looked at a long summer
Through the same sorrow morning and afternoon
As if half-waker half-dreamer
Under an awful white moon

He saw a new hedge a new stack from his window
Heard a secret alien speech
Echo his dream who is lost and mad in the white light
Known and condemned by each.

Lying under leaves that whispered his woe
The moor-birds cried his secret on a dying fall
Who had turned to unknowing farm dumb mountain and so
Spoke, he gave tongue to all.

More voices in waves than streets
More tongues in trees than men
And no ear in which to name his grief
Anew, to form it and to bind again.

And sought the town for a new name
For he must name it lest
He drown and dissolve in this sea of sorrow
Rather than be himself it beating on his breast;

And sought a new for the old name
Wanes with long use, the old sea wall
Leaks is blurred with weeds crumbles
The sea will invade altering all

And then.... But how then this Autumn quiet
Wherein are no words no names only
Blood pulsing to the hill's heart beat
Rich in the sunset year, in the poplar lonely?

He has given himself over to a lack of names
Who when he was all words must make each strong
He names neither grief nor heart nor joy nor weeping
Pain nor wrong.

There is no word for the late low-flying bee
The sunflower's death his mood or the wounded earth
The Autumn daisies' milky-mauve sea :
No sheaf-binding and no dearth.

SUNDAY MORNING

Through the close garden from the water-mead house
Jungled and choked with sleep dreams sleep without ease,
I came to this milky dawn, in the white grass
I trod those dark dew-footprints to this peace.

Where turns wing-sharp on the river,
Swallow-bright swallow-dark, that is my heart's ghost,
A bright boat busy on the river blue as paint
This morning I have forgotten everything almost.

This meadow goes on on on to the world's end
Tall grasses rise into sun-shafts, steam from bright cows,
Tin trees cluster wild rose blooms at the glass bend,
I am the child of joy, morning sun cigarette smoke arouse.

And embody the frail flowering of the heart its lonely
Fugitive poem heard in the quiet when words die
This only is I, all the rest my tangled life only
One part in one warm flesh thick blood slow eye.

Church bell time, sun swings high gay lark
Too intense now a heart aching aching in frail blue
My shadow creeps up behind all dark
Garlanded with flowers the joy-born griefs pursue

Day full-blown on hot lawn, in the water-mead house
Souls converge to the flesh wakening expectantly :
Dark venison stinks, the séracs of red jelly
Are icebergs of an apocalyptic sea.

EXCUSE IN AUTUMN

Leaving the sun's bar-parlour where old men,
Bearded like sunflowers, ail gold afternoon
Mumble like the bees hum
Opening black mouths' fringed hives; alone

Walk the wood, and here last Spring, last year,
Remembering violet primrose silver rain,
Self lost in these, remember tear drip, branch drip,
Warm sloth among wild strawberries, pain

In the Spring's green crying Autumn's plough-rip, evil and
Now rhythm, savage growth and rich decay; [good
Earth and tree swallow up each trait each mood;
I walk where the leaves rot with my yesterday.

Lost past! for even gaining a more clear
Image, a photograph, one finds at most
(As floats in a dim green bath a single coarse hair)
Alien impertinence, a ghost

Claiming relation, denying this modest hour.
Oh God! I must give up and live as birds
And flowers do. Have I a shadow? Ponder a cure
(Dead trunk! dead leaves!) in principles and words.

To be a whole Nineteen-eleven family
Living at Golders Green with a red wall,
Spring joy crocus, young child-drawn almond tree,
In Autumn sea of mauve daisies filling all

Gaps in the heart and sense, whose oeconomies
Soften in smoky dusk, and call to tea :
I would be parents and children and love William Morris,
Believe create hold, love truth purity.

But one is one and all alone and I
Skip delicately, holding thought in a full glass :
Dead leaves crash like seas, in the sky
One cools one's face, comes to anchor like a cloud on the grass.

BROOKSIDE REVERIE

(OR MIND OVER MATTER)

Songs from the the Hesperides
Curve over the earth's edge
Flower pattern for a silken breeze
William kneels in pale sedge

His image quivering under his breath
(Dark lime-tree wind on candle-flames)
Frown or smile eluding death
Or a thought of Henry James

Happily lost in silver sand
Clear struggle over the blue stone
Drowning but Me! *says William*, and
The plumey sky above me shown

Exiled in consciousness, the soul.
Phrases shine out in his dark dream
Behold here William his own goal
Crouched and grey like a willow beside the stream.

My image! William! *It is a white wax flower*
Truth hangs in words
(A bright fish turns in a glass sphere)
It is a flock of birds.

Over this change changeless to bend
Now black in a flush of sunset Still
Withheld to name to comprehend
Across the golden fading hill.

And gleams and fades the soul, *says he,*
In pure life, joy. *At cottage door*
The lemon evening wistfully
Invites him but pursues no more

Fades out in a violet sigh
Tenuous on the window pane
Then, under his assertive lamplight, cry
The bleached insomniac flowers again.

FLORIDA PIER

BIGGER AND WORSE LIES

I had been a week in the pension, when Mademoiselle Béraud, who sat opposite at the long table, startled me by making herself look like a monkey. I had noticed her good clothes and manners, on the day of my arrival. I had shaken hands with her, when she had indicated that it was the moment for shaking hands. I had even had a half-desire to bear myself with something of her grave formality, that I might not represent my country badly in her eyes. Then suddenly, on looking across the table, I saw that instead of sitting with an erect and unsupported spine as she had hitherto, she was now oddly hunched, her head a little on one side, her upper lip made very long, and her gaze fixed on something close beside her. It took me a moment to discover what she was staring at in that apish way.

Her eyes were fixed upon the earring of the Englishwoman sitting next to her. It was of glass, and looked as if it had come from some large shop, mounted, no doubt, on a piece of cardboard. Her stare was so steady that I wondered how Miss Cunningham could not be conscious of it too. She, however, continued to eat hurriedly, only pausing ever and again to readjust a heavy woollen wrap about her shrivelled arms. She was very plain, slight and elderly, perhaps fifty, perhaps more. She looked subdued and weary.

Mademoiselle Béraud leaned towards her and asked, "What kind of stone is that in your new earrings?"

" Cornelian, Chinese. " The little woman did not raise her head as she spoke, but went on eating, as though she feared she might be late.

Mademoiselle Béraud murmured, " Magnificent! But then you always wear very handsome jewels. " Her eyes told bead by bead the rope of large beads encircling Miss Cunningham's neck. Her gaze made their owner glance down at the beads too. Miss Cunningham drawled, " I keep most of my things in the bank. It's safer. These pearls are not real, only very good imitations. " Mademoiselle emitted a note of surprise in a soft purr through her nose.

Then the dessert was brought in, and as soon as Miss Cunningham again bent over her plate, Mademoiselle Béraud resumed her hunched pose and her unblinking stare at the earring. It seemed to be her way of saying across the table, " She lies, her earrings are of glass, she bought them at the Louvre. She buys all her jewellery at the Louvre. Everything she says is a lie; watch me, and you will see what I can make her say. " I dropped my eyes, but I knew that the Frenchwoman had not changed her pose.

On Miss Cunningham's beginning to fold up her napkin, Mademoiselle Béraud again leaned over and asked, " How many times have you heard 'La Bohème'. Ten times, haven't you ? "

" Oh, no, only seven. " Miss Cunningham looked white and her cheeks were caught up in little puckers.

" But don't you know every note of it by now ? " persisted Mademoiselle Béraud, putting her head on one side, and making her brown eyes look dull, beneath her drooping lids.

" Oh, but I love it! " exclaimed Miss Cunningham.

" Or perhaps you love the new tenor ? " queried Mademoiselle in her nasal purr.

Miss Cunningham rose from the table twittering good-

nights to every one. She gathered up a velvet bag, made sure of having her ticket, and said to right and left, "Bonne amusement, bonne amusement, bonne soir."

Mademoiselle Béraud wrinkled her brows with exaggeration, and asked of the table in general: "What does she say? I do not understand. Bonne what? What language was she speaking?" Miss Cunningham had reached the door, and as she opened it, Mademoiselle Béraud called out amiably, "Bon amusement: don't go to sleep during the opera!"

My face was tingling with the blows I felt Miss Cunningham to have received. She might so well have cried out in protest, but she had kept up her affable noddings and little swaggering laugh right up to her shutting of the door.

I made my way between gilt tables and chairs to a corner of the salon and began reading. I had scarcely found my place on the page, when a soft voice asked if I would permit myself to be interrupted. It was Mademoiselle Béraud. She was now all suavity and elegance; there was even something fine in the calm mask of her face. She said that she had heard I was inquiring where I might have some books rebound. Could she take me tomorrow to a most admirable man? It would be a great pleasure if she might indicate the route herself.

I protested that I could not claim so much of her time. She closed her eyes and said that she loved to be of use. She had spent her entire life caring for others. Then, with a quick change to a little girl's delight, she showed me a jacket that she had just made for the cook's niece. I knew that she was constantly employed in such activities for others. Only the night before I had seen her working late on something else not for herself. As she pointed out to me the neat adjustments of the newly finished garment, her eyes blinked and snapped. She seemed a child of seven or eight, working herself up to declaration after declaration of virtue, urged on by a hunger for

praise. The jacket was ingeniously made and I said so. She wagged her head with quite childish elation.

I had been conscious, as she flowed on and on, of the flawless neatness and freshness of her dress, her hair, her shoes, and to my vexation I said that I was sure her taste in dress could never be at fault. She loosed a little fluttering gasp, and her voice became a mere breath of virtue, as she murmured, " J'aime l'ordre. "

I wanted to go to my room and get away from her kaleidoscopic posturing, but I sat silent before her. She suddenly assumed a rallying air and said : " It is rare that we see an Englishwoman as elegant as Madame. Most are like Miss Cunningham, in flat heels and wool. Why are Englishwomen always cold? Of course, with Miss Cunningham, it is age. She says she is thirty-eight, but she must be sixty. What age do you think her? " She asked me so suddenly, that I felt muddled, vexed at knowing so little how to deal with her. I said that Miss Cunningham must know her age.

Mademoiselle Béraud instantly looked worn, wan with life's sadness. " But Miss Cunningham is insane. " And she sighed. " Nothing else could account for her thinking she was being believed. I always remember her in my prayers. Do you think it is dangerous to have her in the house? Will she become suddenly violent? "

" No, " I cried, rising so quickly that I dropped my book on the floor. Mademoiselle Béraud picked it up for me and rose too, as though no signal of courtesy that I gave would ever fail to be answered by her. She stood directly in front of me, so that I was penned into the corner. She shook her head and looked old on purpose. It washed like a wave over her face. " Poor little thing," she murmured, " I wish she would not go out so much. She looks so tired. In bed, madame, if you could see her in bed! One could not imagine how old she is! I nursed her last winter when she was very ill. I changed

her hot water bottle twice during the night for a whole week, poor little thing."

I believed her about the nursing, and she showed compassion so thoroughly that I did so too. Mademoiselle saw this, and again she was a good child, complacent over her effort of virtuousness. I felt that perhaps she *was* a good child, perhaps she was all the things she had been that evening, none making the others impossible. In quick succession she had been crude, vain, kind, venomous, childish, sad. I must fleetingly have given myself away in my eyes, for Mademoiselle Béraud now dabbed hers with her handkerchief, and she did it beautifully, simply and without constraint. Then after blowing her nose with a deft lightness, she took my hand, said goodnight with the quietness of a person whose emotion makes them wish to be alone, and I left the salon at last, dismissed by her at the moment she had quashed my feeling of criticism.

I found next day's luncheon very trying, for all through it Mademoiselle Béraud baited Miss Cunningham. With delicate cruelty, she caught her, held her, let her go, and softly pounced again. Miss Cunningham, with mouse-like despair, remained still, or made tiny darts towards the shelter of bigger lies, but was always enclosed again in the Frenchwoman's veiled scepticism.

Miss Cunningham was called to the telephone and did not return to finish the small piece of pastry left on her plate. Mademoiselle insisted that it be kept hot for her, and finally, after a great deal of fuss, had it sent to her room. When this had been done, she seemed for a moment without employment, until she began to tell of a ball to which she had been on Thursday, and of a villa that had been offered to her at Nice. I felt that she was inventing rather than lying, and if it had to be called lying, then it was the artistic kind; not the lying from necessity of Miss Cunningham.

She seemed to me to grow intoxicated with her skill.

The others stopped talking and listened to her. She told of seeing the husband of one of her friends waiting outside a shop. She knew by his way of returning her greeting that he was not waiting for his wife. She stopped and spoke to him, asking after Madame's health, and protesting that she too would wait until Madame had finished her shopping and joined them. He begged her not to, he had just felt a drop of rain. She insisted, but soon pleaded faintness and asked for his arm. Finally, she said she would have to ask him to see her home, as she was really indisposed. He suggested that he put her in a taxi, but she declared she was not well enough to be left alone, and made him take her to her very door.

Everyone laughed.

Mademoiselle Béraud rose, holding her head bowed with a grotesque mock modesty. There was no reason why all she had said might not be true : only I *knew* it wasn't. I had seen her aware of her inventive fertility; the awareness had transpired especially in her last words. I told myself that my presence it was made her show off so eagerly; I was a newcomer, and could be impressed. Doubtless her baiting of Miss Cunningham was an old performance, freshened up a little upon a new arrival's appearance in the pension.

I decided that I was against it.

I asked if I might change my place at table. Madame regretted. The two young girls next to her had been confided to her charge, and must sit beside her. The Dutch couple next to them had been with her for four years, and would leave if their places were changed. The family of Danes were too large a group to be moved easily.

So I went down to dinner that evening with an apprehension of discomfort.

Hardly had I unfolded my napkin than Miss Cunningham was telling what a horsewoman she had once been. She had easily controlled horses of the vilest temper. She

would only take the highest jumps. Her every word served to dispirit or anger me, I could not be sure which. Why must she lie as much as that? If believing would ease her, I was ready to believe anything. It was pity that I was feeling, I decided. How awful to be driven to such pretences.

I asked her if "La Bohème" had been well sung, and commented on her fondness for music. This made her tell me that she had been trained for opera and hers would have been one of the great voices of the world, only her teachers had had the wrong methods. Actually her voice had been ruined. It had almost killed her. What she said left me abashed. Perhaps if I behaved as if I thought it true, she would somehow be fortified. Perhaps she lied from embarrassment at not having gifts; she could not face being an unimportant little woman. It argued a sensitive modesty, and something gallant, for there was a boldness about what she felt she ought to be. I remembered now that the day of my arrival I had heard her telling that nothing but her weak heart prevented her doing the twenty-two foot dive at the baths. What standards she had set for herself!

I leaned across the table to speak my pity for her lost voice. She laughed, then drawled lightly. "Of course, my real work in life is writing. My friends think it a tragic shame that I have given it up. But what is the use? The neuritis in my arm is so bad that I can barely hold a pen!"

I could feel Mademoiselle Béraud's eyes boring into me, but I continued to look at Miss Cunningham. I was at a loss what to say this time, but I hoped I looked as if she were being convincing. Mademoiselle Béraud used my silence to breathe softly, "You must let me massage your arm; perhaps so I could help you to write."

Imperturbable, Miss Cunningham answered in a lazy voice, "Oh, thank you, but I couldn't bear to have it touched."

I was glad Mademoiselle Béraud had been foiled. All my support in the unequal battle between them went to Miss Cunningham.

Mademoiselle's dark eyes grew glazed and she said, "What luck your neuritis does not prevent you from doing so much of your washing!"

I had noticed once, through Miss Cunningham's open door, a great many gloves and handkerchiefs and other small articles drying in front of her stove; it must have been a similar sight that Mademoiselle Béraud had in mind. I felt myself drawn to the rescue. I said, "That is what is so vexing about neuritis. One can do some things, but not others. Is it not so, Miss Cunningham?"

She agreed with an off-hand nod, and just then I realized that for some moments I had not looked at Mademoiselle Béraud—purely for my own protection—and that that had had the effect of making her restive. I continued to talk to Miss Cunningham, and began to include people on either side of me. I dropped my eyes and lifted them to Mademoiselle Béraud's right, I dropped them again, then lifted them to her left; she became silent, she drooped. I knew that if I had glanced at her, I should have seen her looking like a clever little girl who is unexpectedly ignored.

Everyone was talking now, telling of their struggles with the vulture-like old women who claim one's wraps at the Opera. We were all laughing, amused—except Mademoiselle Béraud. Out of the corner of my eye I saw her cock her head first on one side, then on the other, assume a pious expression; twice I heard her sigh. She sat with her hands folded in her lap. I was surprised that such a brief ignoring of her should have so marked an effect. She was abject, lost. Surely she would rally. Perhaps she would subject Miss Cunningham to something more diabolical than ever.

As we rose, I felt a little uneasy. I must not stay in the salon. Should I go to my room or to a theatre?

Then Mademoiselle Béraud came round the end of the table towards me, with theatre tickets in her hand, and an expression of lofty formality. I saw that I was to be invited to spend the evening with her. In absolute panic, I touched Miss Cunningham on the arm and said, "Won't you come to my room, and let me show you some books that I bought to-day?"

She said she worshipped books, and we left the room together. Going upstairs, I felt a fool. I had created a difficult situation and I had no idea what was to be done about it. We sat in front of my stove, and I showed her my books, and we chattered away at cross-purposes, I abandoning my sentences when begun, and she limiting herself to little ejaculations, "Charming, simply charming!"

I put my books to one side, flattened by having shown them, and we sat staring at the enamelled stove, our silence growing awkward. Then Miss Cunningham gave a little laugh, and began tentatively, "I feel I really ought to warn you about Mademoiselle Béraud. I hate to have to say it, but I think you should be told—she does not speak the truth."

"Oh," I said.

"You must not believe anything she says. I hear that after I left the table to-day, she told of being at a ball on Thursday. Well, I saw her sitting in a restaurant at ten, drinking a vin chaud."

"Oh," I said again. Then I laughed, and my laugh startled me. I said, "Lying is very diverting; it's a puzzle to me why we so often speak the truth." Miss Cunningham laughed too, rather shrilly, and as we stared at four pieces of bright mica, I felt we were mad.

I shivered nervously. I stretched out my hand for a box of sweet biscuits, and offered them to her. We sat nibbling biscuits, and still looking stupidly at the stove, and I wondered what good sound would finally break the silence.

Miss Cunningham laughed again It made me jump. "You are such an understanding person," she began, "that I can tell you what I would never think of telling anyone else. It was my own fault that I did not do more with my great talents."

I winced, and waited. What if she were going to speak the truth?

"The fact is," she went on, "the year I was presented at Court I created such a furore, that just when I should have been working my hardest, I was turning people's heads instead."

"Oh," I breathed, and it made no sound.

"And then we travelled a great deal," she continued, "I've been presented at every Court in Europe."

My eyes grew hot and I feared they would fill with tears. I wanted to put out my hand and say, "You seem to me a dear, and determined, and—and all right, but whatever makes you have to say all these things?" I pursed my mouth and nodded.

She next spoke of her father, and her voice sounded younger and more natural. "Such an odd thing," she mused, "I haven't thought of it for years. I wonder what made it come into my head now. My father punished me once, and pretty soundly too. It must have been the only time, for he adored me. What do you suppose it was for?"

"I don't know," I answered.

"For lying," she said, and darted her eyes at me, I looked away quickly.

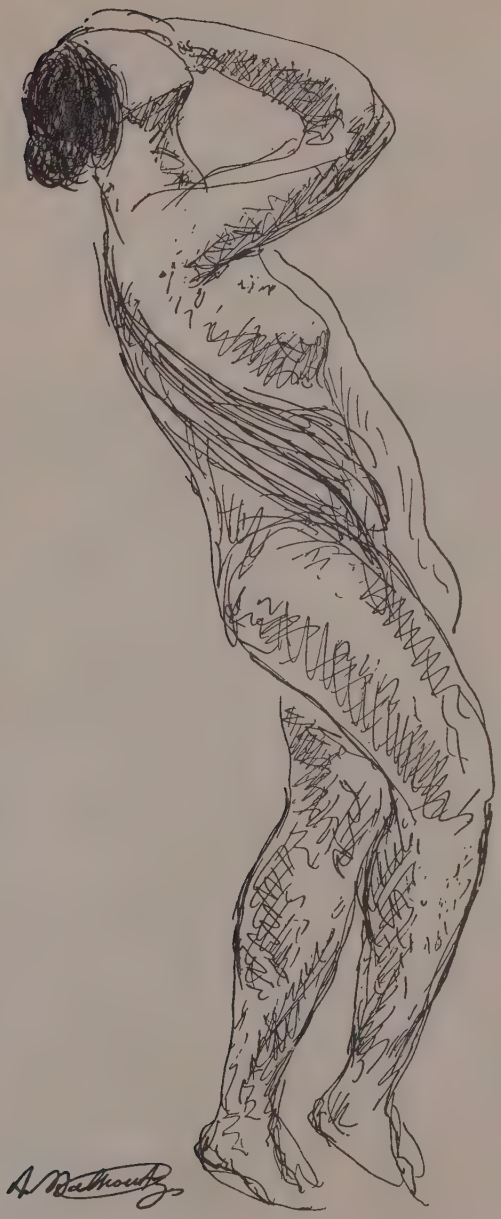
"Isn't it absurd what children will do?" she laughed, "And me of all people. I don't suppose I've told a lie since, and I was six then—thirty-two years ago." She caught her breath, as though she had touched something hot and not been burnt.

She chatted a little longer of her brothers and told what a remarkable shot they had always thought her. Then presently she rose to go, and when the door had

closed behind her the tears rolled down my cheeks. I stood in the middle of the floor, unable to sit again before that enamelled stove. I glanced at my books, but I had no wish to read. I thought, " Well, I can't stand here all night feeling broken-hearted. " I walked to the armoire and then began packing.

As I folded my dresses I knew I was being a coward. But I went on packing.

It was very early the next morning when I left that pension.



Drawing, *by A. Walkowitz*

MONTGOMERY BELGION

THE MAD IMAGINATION*

For Plato, the lunatic, the lover, and the poet are akin. In addition to common insanity, there is, says Socrates in the *Phaedrus*, the madness of exaltation, and it is of four kinds. Leaving the manifestation of this latter madness as love to the last, for it is of love that he is discoursing, he first names the madness of the seer and the madness of the " purificator. " Then there is, he continues, a third kind of madness, which comes from the Muses. He who without the divine madness comes to the door of the Muses, confident that he will be a good poet by art, meets with no success, and the poetry of the sane man vanishes into nothingness before that of the inspired madman.

" This, " says Mr. M. W. Bundy, in his valuable study of how the imagination was regarded in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (*The Theory of Imagination in Classical and Mediaeval Thought*), " this is the tradition which... made Φαντασία an instrument of supra-sensible knowledge, thus emancipating it from the tyranny of reason.... In this view, best exemplified in Dante, the processes of imagination are operative in Paradise, whither reason cannot follow. This, of course, is not identical with the concept of later critical philosophy, which, joining subject and object in an ideal metaphysical unity, laid the basis for the appreciation of the imagination in the nineteenth century. It is, however, the mediaeval equivalent of this view. "

* An essay from a volume entitled *The Human Parrot* and shortly to be published by the Oxford University Press.

Mr. Bundy is saying, in short, that the theories of, for example, Coleridge can be traced back, through medieval thinkers, to Plato.

Yet, even if that is so, it is nevertheless queer to us, whose notions in this matter are mainly those of Coleridge, that Plato should speak of madness. For him to say : " inspired, " sounds to us natural; but why should he also say : " madness " ? The key must lie, of course, in the actual process whereby the work of literary art comes into existence.

That process is divisible into three stages, which, if the terms do not sound too obstetrical, we may call respectively : conception, gestation, and expression.

About conception there are two things to be noted. One, it seems that a writer cannot hit upon the subject for a literary work by means of a deliberate exertion of his will. The sense that a particular subject would be susceptible in his hands to literary treatment he has to allow to come to him. He may be on the look-out for a subject. Indeed, if he is not, it may, so to speak, pass him by. But he cannot force its advent. On that innumerable writers are agreed. Conception may be an act, but it is not the writer's act. In conception he is passive.

Two, conception never occurs except as the result of some stimulus. If it is an act of the imagination, and it cannot well be anything else, the imagination evidently acts to conceive only when a writer is excited. To draw on Plato further, even as, according to Timaeus, no man attains to divine and true divination when in his sober senses, but only when asleep or ill or in a fit of enthusiasm, so with attaining to literary conception.

The same two things are true of the early part of gestation, though in this stage the stimulus, one should note, is usually provided by the subject itself. With the imagination, so long as it is given a start, one notion is constantly leading to another, *ad infinitum*. It remains

that a stimulus there has to be. But, also, in this early part of the gestation stage, the imagination, left to itself once it has been given an initial stimulus, a lead, is apt to wander. Thus, in the early and exclusively meditative part of gestation, there has already to be a conative effort on the writer's part. He must apprehend, even if still vaguely, an end for his imaginings or fancies, viz. what *essentially* he has to say, and vigorously desire that end. And the effort he makes is not only dependent on his will: just as to imagine requires excitement, so the effort requires calm.

However, the need for effort, and for calm, collected effort, is even greater in the second part of gestation, when the writer first gives to the work a form by sketching it out. He then finds himself confronted with a chaos of imaginings or fancies, among which he can no longer delay to establish order, for otherwise it is impossible for him to set down anything. But the establishing of order is difficult, for it naturally depends on his apprehending what it is he really wishes to say, and at this point that often evades his clear apprehension.

At length the third stage is reached : expression. This final stage does not, as a rule, arrive of its own accord. The writer has to force himself to enter upon it. What happens often is that either he finds he has done all the preliminary labour he can—meditations, notes, sketches, etc.—or else he is being pressed to deliver his MS., and so expression can no longer be put off. But he undertakes it with some reluctance. For, compared with imagining a literary work—than which nothing is easier—or even with ordering and outlining its expression in advance, the actual expression is a task of considerable difficulty. The work, as it were, resists expression. And if the difficulty declines as the writer produces more and more works, that is only because of the tendency of writers to repeat themselves.

The difficulty is first the difficulty of getting a start.

The opening of the work should shape its whole course, and accordingly it should also be a visible landmark to the writer himself of what he wants the completed work to be. Hence, instinctively *qua* writer, the writer feels that, before the opening is set down, he ought to see, as clearly as possible, the whole work, as it will be when completely expressed. Just as the manufacturer of beds or tables has to be looking, according to Plato, at the Form while he is constructing one or the other, so the writer has to construct from a model. And the opening is to serve for him as a kind of memorandum of what that model is. But it can no longer be, as in conception and gestation, a model of which the parts are apprehended simultaneously. When it comes to expression, the writer has to view his model spread out in the succession of its parts. And to do this he has to make an effort, and this effort hinders him in effecting what the French call the "mise en train" of expression. What I wish to insist upon is, that although we cannot tell how it is that the effort succeeds, we do see that it itself must be deliberate and willed, and also that it must be undertaken calmly and collectedly.

Next, the start having been made, the difficulty comes to lie, as expression proceeds, in the restraining of the imagination. For, as Dante understood, imagination is of course quite as indispensable to expression as it is to conception and gestation. Yet if, in expression, the writer gives the imagination its head, as he may, and in fact must, in the preceding stages, what he writes will tend towards the incoherent, will run to hasty judgements and other eccentricities, and will fail to be what, with or without full consciousness, he must really intend to say. And this will be the more so in proportion to the importance, the novelty, and the nicety, of his subject-matter. One can see how. Since, as has been said, the exercise of imagination depends on excitement, and since, conversely, the imaginative person's excitement rises the busier his

imagination is—the imagination, once set off, providing its own stimulus—it follows that the more the writer is excited, the more active his imagination will be, and also that the more active his imagination is, the more excited he will grow. But the more the writer is excited, the less what he says is apt to be sound, the less it can be either accurate or effective. For it is not when a man is in a state of excitement, as both Aristotle and Coleridge, among others, have noted, that he is likely to measure his words. And alike for accuracy and effectiveness, measurement is essential. Hence the writer has, in expression, to be constantly scrutinizing what his imagination proposes. But such scrutinizing implies dominion over his excitement. And if the excitement is dominated, at once the imagination's *continuing* to make happy discoveries is jeopardized. Thus the writer has somehow to strike a balance between encouraging the imagination's independent activity and exerting the purely rational activity of the intellect. The finds of the writer's passive excitement must not be interrupted, and yet there must be that proper control of the imagination by the active intellect, which Maimonides held to be the perfect condition. That is why expression, as it proceeds, remains so difficult. It calls, on the one hand, for passivity and excitement, and, on the other, for intention and calm, and this not, as in gestation, successively, but simultaneously.

Further, the difficulty of reconciling the passivity and excitement with the intention and calm will be intensified in proportion to the subject-matter's importance, novelty, and nicety, for the more the subject-matter has these characteristics, the more the writer has an additional occupation during expression : despite his having before him to serve as a guide the opening upon which he has decided, he has to strive continuously to ascertain just what it is he aims at saying.

That the striving to see what he really wants to say has to go on, after the gestation stage, after an opening for the

expression has been adopted, and, when expression a first time is, as it often is, still inadequate, even after expression has apparently been completed, we see from the fact that so many writers have to correct and rewrite. There are, says Poe, " painful erasures and interpolations " and " true purposes seized only at the last moment. " It is this which I take as the main basis for my present argument.

The title of work of literary art cannot legitimately be restricted to poems, and the prose writings styled imaginative. Imagination has presided at the conception of the works of all such authors as Montesquieu and Fustel de Coulanges, Taine, Montaigne, Descartes, Machiavelli and Vico, Hume and Burke, Boswell and Gibbon. Without imagination the gestation and expression of those works would not have been possible. Every *writer*, in fact, is, or should be, an artist. Moreover, it is into the production of literary works regarded as non-imaginative that the greatest amount of artistic labour, as it must be called, often goes. If poets and novelists and playwrights correct and rewrite much, the writers of the other sort correct and rewrite perhaps even more.

Now, to account for the necessity under which the writer is so frequently of constantly correcting and rewriting during expression, it seems to me that we must admit that often the writer has the greatest difficulty in apprehending what it is he really has, from the outset of conception, to say, and that this difficulty is far from being always overcome before expression proper begins, or even, in some cases, by the time expression is left by the writer as complete.

Now how is it that there is this difficulty ?

We have seen that the coming of the original fancy or notion for the subject of a literary work depends on a stimulus, which puts the writer in a productive state of excitement. We have seen too that the multiplying of the original fancy, which multiplying is the development of the subject's conception, also depends on his being

excited. Finally, we have seen that excitement in the writer is essential to the subject's adequate expression. And then again, we have seen how, during expression, the writer should somehow keep his excitement within bounds, and especially not set down, without careful scrutiny, what occurs to him by favour of that excitement. Otherwise his writing will run to the expression of hasty judgements and other eccentricities. For the imagination, which is what the excitement renders active, is inherently hasty : it leaps, and the fancies which it proposes to the writer are fragmentary and nonsensical—in Poe's phrase, " elaborate and vacillating crudities. " Although these fancies do not appear in our mind isolatedly, the crudeness can best be illustrated with an isolated specimen, our fancy of the dragon. Of this Cook Wilson says (*Statement and Inference*, p. 544) :

" The imagination in a given case only refers to a part of the reality of the object. When we say we imagine a serpent breathing fire, all we imagine is the colour and exterior appearance of a serpent, and the same for fire. We are not imagining the physical properties of fire, and the biological properties of the serpent, which make ' breathing fire ' impossible for the serpent. "

That is why I call the products of the imagination : fancies, and not : ideas, in that following medieval usage, which is the exact opposite of Coleridge's. In medieval usage, says Mr. Bundy (*op. cit.*), " *phantasia* implied the loftier functions, the greater freedom (in contrast to *imaginatio*), — but at the same time the greater liability to error. "

Thus, as I say, if the writer sets down, without a preliminary careful scrutiny, what the imagination proposes, his writing will run to the expression of hasty judgements and other eccentricities. Now, concerning hasty judgements, there is a passage in Diderot, which I think pertinent. It occurs in *Les Bijoux Secrets*, there where Blocolocus has been discoursing of dreams to the sultan's favourite,

Mirzoza, and after she has remarked: "If one does not know enough concerning the qualities which together characterize this or that species, or if one judges hastily that the set of qualities fits or does not fit this or that individual, one runs the risk of taking brass for gold," he inquires:

"Well, Madam, are you aware of what might be said of those who make such judgements?"

"That they are dreaming while wide awake," replied Mirzoza.

"Excellent, Madam," continued Blocolocus; "and nothing is more philosophical nor more true on a thousand occasions than the familiar expression, '*I think you must be dreaming*'; for nothing is commoner than men who imagine that they are reasoning, when they are only dreaming with their eyes open... Our dreams are but hasty judgements...."

"Oh, how well I understand you," said Mirzoza; "and are those hasty judgements not precisely what is madness?"

This passage is, I think, most pertinent, for with it before us, we have only one short step to take and an interpretation will have been found for the dark reference by Socrates in the *Phaedrus* to the inspired madness of the poet. If hasty judgements, when the writer is guilty of them, are but the direct expression of the crude fancies by which he has been visited in the excited waking dream of imaginative activity, and madness, as Mirzoza reminds us, is but the making of hasty judgements, we are led to this position: the excitement in which alone, and independently of the will, literary inspiration is possible, must be a form of madness.

We are the more warranted in taking up this position, that, as I have tried to show, the writer so often has the greatest difficulty, throughout the production of the literary work, in apprehending what it is he really has to say. And undoubtedly he succeeds, more or less, in

ultimately apprehending and saying this, not as Coleridge avers, by the " gentle and unnoticed controul " of his will over both the imagination and his reason, but rather by the exertion of a fully conscious and vigorous effort of his will. May we not then believe that the difficulty is as great as it often is because it is the difficulty of converting the mad fancies of the imagination into communicable sanity? Frequently, indeed, when the writer has at length completed the expression of his subject, and looks back on his achievement, it must seem to him that he was, when the subject first arose in his mind, stark mad, and that what he has accomplished in his arduous effort at expression is simply the ordering and elucidating of a conception originally wild and incoherent.

And if the discovery of what he has to say, which the writer thus makes, is the fundamental part of the process whereby the work of literary art comes into existence, then we have no justification for calling the process, as, following Coleridge, we commonly do call it, creative.

There is a groping, and it is a groping to discover and understand rather than to create. According to Timaeus, the man who has been inspired has, when again in his sober senses, the task of reflecting upon, after recalling, the words uttered to him when asleep or awake by the divinatory powers or by enthusiasm, and of reasoning about the visions then perceived and seeing what their sense may be. Likewise with the writer who has been visited by fancies.

It remains that there is inspiration. Does this imply, as Plato believed, that—setting aside, of course, religious revelation—we can ever have super-sensible knowledge? Surely it is easier to believe that, if the writer could only remember, he would invariably find that the inspiration had resulted somehow from experience. But, evidently, and as Leibniz was convinced, we must in that case do some of our thinking entirely outside consciousness, for we are presented with that thinking's results. If the

Bergsonian term : intuition, is confusing, it certainly refers to something. This, however, in no way impugns Aristotle's dictum that all our knowledge is derived from our sense-experience.

ROMER WILSON

A DREAM

Confession of Poverty to St. Francis

Dreams of happiness, dreams of difficult things
Poke unknown faces at me, symbols and signs;
And I have no life, am not myself, am lost.
I am nothing but a sleep where phantoms ride.
Before I know what I see the dream is gone,
Melted in something new. I dream of love,
And cannot love but with a tension of soul
Impossible to sustain; and hate and fear
Like demoniac music hold me for a while,
Fade and forsake me. Even the little things
Clutch me and keep me, let me fall again.
I have nothing for a defence, no wall, no town.
I am an open road. Somewhere, perchance,
The footsteps that pass over me aim to go,
But I have no sense of where they go, no sense
Of whence they come. I am just this part of life
Here by the broken house. Unconscious of a soul
I see only the broken house, and a million travellers
Who call there and get no cheer,
And go sadly away leaving me always these,
Their vague stray footsteps.
Is this all a dream?
And am I gay and good and strong,
With Heaven before me and friends on either hand?
Is that all a dream in this falling age,
This shattered time that tried to be a God?
I do not know. What do I know? Just this!

That I hate all dreams and pray to have two hands
Able to put one stone in yon broken house,
To halt one ghost on its outward vanishing,
To cry just once : "Halt! they build this inn!
I put a stone in the wall! The inn will stand!
Halt, ghost! Take heart! take cheer at the Lamb and
[Flag!"
But if I cannot build, make me that stone,
And let some other set me in the wall.

GILBERT HIGHET

NINETY NIGGERS

The night club was like a jungle. It throbbed with liquid heat; its air was stained with perfumes, which ebbed and churned around the fans, high up under the oozing roof. A relentless music beat on and on, dark with jungle drums : the room seemed to rock uneasily to the drums, there were no gaps of silence in that urgent rhythm, all laced together by long languid creepers of melody. Voices louder than the music reeled through the smoke — hoarse calls, high laughter, a strange inhuman violence of words. The room was full of savages.

Ninety niggers were in the Peacock's Nest. They laughed at the few white men, silent at tables by the far wall. They stared contemptuously at the four tobacco-skinned Brazilians, who played a melancholy tango now and then—the tango, even the shrill rapid paso doble was just white trash music. But when the negro band, blazing with scarlet dinner-jackets and gilt instruments, burst into another shouting foxtrot or moaning blues, everywhere teeth gleamed, and black hands slapped out the time, and the room was full of their singing and their great bodies swaying in the dance. They liked being all together; they liked to order from white waiters and to curse them for being white; they liked to sit beside the white cabaret girls, and be amused. They liked to be boss.

Ninety niggers, burning money. A little black chauffeur strutted to a reserved table, wearing his master's clothes and his own diamond rings. A monstrous prize-

fighter, with a tame leopard chained to his wrist, shadow-boxed with a balloon in front of the band. Nine grinning stokers from a Yankee warship were throwing silver dollars at the banjoist's glittering instrument—he caught every one before it struck the vellum. They sat all together and laughed : they wore white sailor-caps above black clothes and jewelled linen. Two jazz singers, politely rolling dice among their absinthe glasses, won and paid money without speaking to each other. The Jewish manager's eyes rolled as he watched his gold pot boiling. The negroes laughed : silken bubbles of noise.

One did not laugh. Watching the dancers sullenly, he listened to a fair-haired girl; her blue eyes asked for his bloodshot eyes, and her earrings trembled.

" T'en fais pas, Lou : faut pas rouspeter comme ça..." a breath between each sentence, hopefully " ...you don't mind dancing, Lou. A dance isn't anything. Lou, I've seen you dance with girls a lot worse than Smoky. *You* know him, don't you ? he never gets fresh—not with me, Lou. "

" No ? "

" No, he doesn't, he doesn't. Smoky wouldn't, Lou : he's a friend of mine—— "

" No friend of mine. That Smoky nigger's no use to me : none—at—all, see ? Well, so long as we're runnin' together, he's no friend of yours, either. "

The girl shook her head. " All right, then : all right, Lou. But you *are* a fool about Smoky. He's—— "

" Me ? I'm a fool, am I ? Well, see here : I'm not Smoky's fool—no, not Lou—not your fool either. If there's any foolin' done, I do it; an' if Smoky fools around here, I'm liable to cut him, right away, see ? Right away—— "

A razor in his hand gashed the air, and was hidden again. The girl shivered, and laughed.

" Oh, well... come and dance, big boy. Keep me safe! "

He took her sulkily in his diamonded paws; they danced away, lost in the swirl of perfume, silk, flesh, music.

. . . . . .

Lou laughed at the prize-fighter, who was dancing a laborious dance alone in the centre of the floor. Notes from a clarinet ran nimbly round him, hurried his feet, and tripped him up; the pianist sounded TEN solemn notes, and the room exploded into fireworks of laughter and shouts. Four of the stokers put a paper hat on his head and carried him away, with his leopard following, resigned.

Now Julie smiled at her man. That dance had made him pleasant; he was laughing at last, and his eyes were quiet. A huge ugly man, she thought, watching him proudly like a lion-trainer. Lou grinned back, poured out two tumblers of champagne, and bawled for raisin pie. While he munched it amicably, a juggler reminded him of the Harlem cellars. He talked to her about them : there was one where the bar was steel-lined for safety. Bartenders' insurance, he said; but a razor could do more in any fight than a gun. When Julie told him to be quiet, he grinned again : the lion with its meat.

A cymbal crash. The Jewish manager blinked in a spotlight : the next dance, he announced, would be " in the American style. " He explained, bowed frequently, and edged back among the ring of glistening shirt-fronts. The black men were sociable, and they liked to have a new girl for every round of the floor : the girls were flattered, enjoying the competition. Even Lou was not angry when one of the stokers " cut in "—he slipped Julie into his arms, and tapped another man's shoulder in his turn. Julie was delighted when they met again, as the dance flowed into a pool of applause.

It broke up again into circling waves. Lou held Julie closer, relinquished her once, and took her again, eagerly

this time. The last chorus galloped along, swinging them round faster than the others; but when the expected hand tapped his arm, Lou shrugged his shoulders and left Julie. She danced away round the curve of the floor with her new partner—a little man, carefully dressed.

They rounded the curve. One half turn more... then his face came into sight....

Smoky!

The band had stopped : a scream sliced through the applause. Lou swung Julie to the floor, gripped Smoky's face, and jerked him against a table, bleeding from one eye. Instantly there was complete silence. Ninety savages watched for a killing; their negro eyes rolled from one enemy to the other, and black fists twitched. The ring closed in. Lou, glancing at Julie, growled, for she was staring hopelessly at Smoky, she had one hand out to save Smoky. So she *did* want Smoky : she could have him for keeps, then, in a little while. Lou ran forward. All the light in the room dripped from the blade swinging in his hand. He crouched——

A gasp warned him. Smoky's right hand was ready, facing him, muzzled with blue steel. A revolver's eye watched him as he crouched.

Silence.

Neither moved. If Lou rushed, the gun would murder him; if Smoky shot, Lou would slash him as he fell. Death swinging on a metal balance....

The silence was years old. It froze round the two men; they faced each other in a grey pallor; but neither slackened his hold of power. Suspense... suspense... walking a glass bridge across death....

Something moved in the silence.

A sound ?

Four notes of quiet melody moved through the room. Soft, soft. Four notes, narrow and sad. The air breathed round them, at last. They doubled themselves, still softly, like a breath in the heat. Slowly they grew

into a tune: slowly, slowly, like the darkening green in the evening sky. *Relax... relax...* said the music; and the blood in stopped hearts flowed on with it, gently moving again in the moving stream of melody. The notes breathed a little more strongly : even Lou and his enemy took deeper breath. On guard still. Murder still glared in their eyes—razor against revolver, strength against craft, jealousy against hate—but slowly, slowly its glare was paling.

And now everyone knew the melody :

Ah hate to see
that evening sun go down....

The crowd sighed. Other thoughts : not only hate and murder : other thoughts swam in upon the little tide of music.

Jus' hate to see
that evening sun go down....

The negro saxophonist was playing it very gently—the thin golden tune, the old, young, heart-filling tune, the sad quiet song threaded with irony, the song they all knew. Every nigger knew the nigger song. "The Saint Louis Blues."

They all knew it now, and they were singing it. The stokers crooned it in beautiful deep voices; the bandsmen played it, weaving suave webs of music behind the soft complaining song.

Feelin' tomorrow
lak Ah feel today,
feelin' tomorrow
jus' lak Ah feel today :
Ah'll pack mah trunk
an' make mah getaway....

A sad comfortable song; its sadness was older than this sudden duel. Eyes left the two enemies, and rolled upwards in the long melancholy of the negro spirit; voices

grew beautiful in the old lament of the exiled people. In the swell of that singing Lou's big body grew out of his ape-crouch into manhood. Drops of sweat fell from his face, but the electric glare behind his eyes dimmed and vanished. Smoky too was swaying in the gust of music which filled the room : he stood up easily and listened. The irony and the folly of life grew clear in the violin's voice : silver above the bronze.

Saint Louis woman
with her diamond rings
pull dat man round
by her apron strings....

The melody was bitter and consoling, friendly and powerful : the melody was master. Lou glanced contemptuously at the woman and walked away, sliding the razor into his pocket.

J. B. PRIESTLEY

THAT QUARTER

It was much better than this quarter, in which I am awake. Through the clustered raindrops on the window pane, I can see the bare branches moving grotesquely in the wind. There is not the smallest hint of sunshine. The muffin man (for it is Sunday morning in Hampstead, and only in Hampstead on Sunday and, I believe, in New Zealand does Victoria still reign) has just passed, ringing his doleful bell, tolling for many lost digestions. It is all very sad, and, I repeat, it was much better in that other quarter, which, when I left it, was somewhere on the frontier of Brown's Republic. Never again, unless I go mad and dream the same dream night after night, shall I come within sight of Brown's Republic. I shall never know if the republican forces captured that fort, the fort into which I passed just before drinking my early cup of tea. Yet there are compensations. I suppose I must be the only man who has lived in a world that contained Brown's Republic. I am now a far traveller, and richer than I was when I went to bed, last night.

The metaphysicians, the psycho-analysts, the psychologists, the doctors and the fortune-tellers have all told us a lot about dreams, but nobody has ever explained to me how they begin. You never catch the curtain going up on them. One minute, you are not dreaming and all is blank; the next minute, you are in the middle of a strange life, faced at once with all manner of problems, and have to get on with it and them. Now some time about daybreak this morning, I found myself being

congratulated because I had been appointed a delegate to some international political conference, and to represent Brown's Republic. The instant that Brown's Republic was mentioned, I knew what it was, though my knowledge was rather vague, just as it is about Turkestan or Chile. I knew that Brown's Republic was somewhere in Central Asia, Afghanistan way; that it had a population of about two million, and that it was an English-speaking independent state. You remember how the mutineers from the Bounty settled on Pitcairn Island, and for a time made an independent state out of that remote rock. Well, Brown's Republic had been created in a similar fashion, though, of course, on a much bigger scale. I did not know who Brown was (or will be, for perhaps this was a glimpse of the future—see Dunne's "Experiment With Time"), nor why the republic had been called after him. Perhaps he was my friend, Ivor Brown, the dramatic critic, who is quite capable of creating an independent state in Central Asia or anywhere else, if once he should get tired of the theatre. But there it was—Brown's Republic, and I was to represent it at the conference, no mean honour, you will agree, when you consider that I was not even a citizen.

"And if you go to Brown's Republic," said my old fourth form master, who suddenly popped up from nowhere, "you must notice the conditions there."

"I will," I told him.

"What I want to know is," he continued, beaming at me through his pince-nez, "are people happier there than they are here? I've been told that they are."

"So have I," and I said this with conviction. It was my belief at that moment that you could have a wonderful time in Brown's Republic.

"Let me know then, Priestley," he said, and shook my hand with great enthusiasm.

I am sorry that I cannot remember how I arrived at the conference or where it was. All that I can recollect

clearly is that I walked into an enormous hall in which about forty men were seated round the outside edge of one of those narrow circular tables, not unlike those tables in use at some common rooms in Oxford and Cambridge, but completely circular and, of course, much larger. I knew I was late and I hurried to find my place. The noise in there was deafening, as well it might be, for all the delegates were hard at work, playing xylophones. (I will make you a present of the associative clue here, for is there not a Teddie Brown in our music halls who plays a xylophone?) Nobody took any notice of me, perhaps because it is difficult to play a xylophone and take any notice of anybody.

I walked a long way round this monstrous table, and at last found a vacant place and a small card there, like those you find at dinner parties, with my name on it. I wasted no more time; duty demanded that Brown's Republic should have a voice at this conference; so I picked up the little hammers and—one, two, three, four—off I went. Like all the other delegates, I was a dashing performer on the xylophone. We were all playing variations on the same tune, and though perhaps too noisy for a refined listener, it was a good tune and an excellent performance. I enjoyed myself hugely, and am prepared to attend a political conference, as a representative of Brown's Republic, in any part of the world, if it is conducted in the same exhilarating manner. The usual oratory of conferences, with its vague and woolly metaphors, cannot be compared to the xylophone, with its fine ring and clarity.

There followed one of those dramatic quick-changes that make our life in dreams preferable to our ordinary existence, so filled with tedious routine, whether of work or travel. One minute, I was hammering away at the conference; the next minute, I was alone and far away, without a trace of the conference near me, not even a pair of xylophone hammers. I was walking across a huge

barren tract of country, with nothing but ancient rocks and waving brown grasses to be seen. I was not in uniform, but nevertheless my equipement was soldierly. I had a knapsack, a revolver at my belt, and a long gun over my shoulders. At once I knew that I was carrying a dispatch to a small fort on the frontier of Brown's Republic. This fort was occupied by a small British naval force. I do not think that Great Britain and Brown's were actually in a state of war, but obviously they were at loggerheads and ripe for battle. Do not ask me what the trouble was, because I do not know. Nor can I tell you why I, so lately the representative of that noble republic at the world conference, should have allowed myself to carry dispatches for Great Britain. It would be useless too to inquire what a naval brigade was doing somewhere in Central Asia. All these are mysteries, and I do not care if they remain mysteries for ever. What remains clear and bright in my mind is the fact that as I walked over that remote plain I was happy. I am still doubtful about the generally accepted theory of dreams: but if it is true, if dreams are more or less the visit of a repertory company from the unconscious, which is determined to have a show some time, then all I can say is that my unconscious mind must be in a fairly healthy condition. Those dark and terrifying dreams rarely come near me. In that quarter, as a rule, all is bright and lively, if a trifle grotesque. I know far more worries, fears, anxieties, in my ordinary waking moments. I am not, I suppose, one of those people who suppress the old jungle stuff, the little inclinations towards rape, torture, murder; if they are mentioned at all, they are mentioned in the open council of the conscious; and though I may keep secrets from my relatives and friends, I keep none from myself. To be happy, then, in a dream is nothing unusual.

Yet I think I was unusually happy as I crossed that plain with my dispatch and my ridiculous gun. Some-

thing of that feeling of great content has remained in my mind, like a little patch of yellow sunlight. I might have been a man who had been released from prison—perhaps I was. This is all mysterious too, perhaps the greatest of the mysteries, for I have little relish now for adventures with revolvers, guns, artillery, and have done all the soldiering I want to do. The thought of striding across Central Asia in this fashion gives my awakened self no pleasure at all. But I was as happy in my dream as a boy on the first day of the holidays, and, indeed, I had a boy's keen animal pleasure in the sunlight, the sight of the waving grasses, the smell of the dust, simple and sensuous joys that Time has stolen from me, by way of a liver, too much tobacco, concupiscence, tax-paying, and I know not what else, all clouding the senses. To protect us from the folly (now universal, by the way, and a mark of the age) of going through life looking for happiness, the professional wise men tell us that we do not really know when we are happy; but they lie. I have been happy and have known that I was happy, and as I walked across that plain, this morning, I knew I was happy.

At last I came to hilly ground, with more and bigger rocks tumbled about it, and I thought I saw some distant figures moving, so I looked at my gun. I can see that gun now, as I sit here in another world. It was absurdly long and slender, made of some queer browny-pearly substance, with the smallest trigger I have ever seen, so tiny that I could hardly get a finger on to it. I climbed a hillock or two; then came to a really steep slope, which seemed to be crowned by a building of some sort. It was the fort. When I reached the top of the hill, I saw a whole army on the other side, and realized at once that this was the army of Brown's Republic, prepared to defend its frontier and ready to besiege the fort. The gates, however, were wide open, and it looked as if there was a truce. In order to reach this entrance, I had to pass quite

close to a little group of men who were republican troops and looked like a free-and-easy outlying picket. I had to pass close to them and then walk towards the fort with my back turned towards them.

"Now, don't go and fire at me," I shouted to them.

"Go on, go on," they shouted back. "You're all right." And they waved their big slouch hats and laughed. I recognized them then. Every face was fairly familiar. The small thickset man in front, with a reddish nose and drooping black moustache, was a fellow who was in my platoon in France, a fellow I had not seen for fifteen years. There he was, his face glistening in the sunlight, waving his absurd hat. Clearly, I had nothing to fear from the strange army of Brown's Republic, and so I walked away from it, towards the open gates of the fort, without a shrinking of the spine. As I walked into the fort, some of Brown's Republicans came out, jolly fellows all of them. I explained who I was to two armed sailors. "Go up there," they told me. I went, and found myself staring at my early cup of tea on a drizzly Sunday morning.

With luck, I hope to cross America very soon and then visit the islands of the Southern Pacific, which are far, far away. But they are not as far away as Brown's Republic and that sunlit rocky plain. How do I get back there? That is what I want to know, and that is what no man can tell me. On some map, in some world, Brown's Republic still flourishes. Where is that map, where is that world?

Drawing, *by Sybil Emerson*

RUTH FENISONG

REINCARNATION

"In proof of the soul's transmigration we are told by men and women that they are distinctly conscious of their previous existence on earth—and invariably of course as remarkable personalities. Not one of them has ever had the least recollection of having embodied a beggar, cleaner of sewers, slave,——."* ARTHUR SCHNITZLER.

This sylph pretends recalling Salomé
As mansion for her soul upon that day
When Salomé had but to voice a wish
And it was served upon a silver dish.
Perhaps she speaks no lie—I do not know.
Though I was there of course I did not go
Within a stone's throw of the wanton wench.
The kitchen was my sphere—a wooden bench
My resting place and when the cook was out
I stirred the queenly soup and feared the knout
Attendant on mistake—or else I went
Into the castle yard and fed the swine—
Upon my lowly labours so intent
'Twere one to me the weather dark or fine.

This man with auburn hair was Essex when
Elizabeth held court—his conscious ken
Embraces the impetuosities
That won him to her heart—recalls with rue
His white young valours—his precocities.
Perhaps it may be that I saw him there

* From the March 1931 issue of THIS QUARTER.

In all his knightlihood though I can swear
I was no lady of her retinue.
Rather I think I must have been the one
Who cleaned the throne room when the day was done
And duties of the crown were set aside
For lighter things—I think that when I died
She found her throne less polished as she sat
At audience and mourned me just for that.

And many more with concupiscency
Insatiable while they take their ease
In bodies that can hardly hope to please
Their pampered souls—voice insufficiency
Of present state—for lovely Salomé
Is now a chorus girl and Essex stands
Night-porter at the door with folded hands—
And both give service for a meagre pay.
While I unchanged by passing century
Still work as menial—nor venture me
To dwell on splendour—since I know my grace
And deftness in performing dirty stint
Are never of a single lifetime's mint—
And that I need not boast to save my face.

KENNETH FEARING

THREE MEN

I had to laugh when that mechanic took the stand. There he was, just as he came from the garage. Corduroy trousers, khaki jacket, blue jersey, horn-glasses. Even the grey tweed cap he kept twisting in his lap—that had been in the operative's report, too. Nothing unusual about any one of the details, of course, but when a whole combination of them matched like that, it meant something. But nobody else seemed to notice that the mechanic fitted exactly with Groman's description of him, and nobody questioned him on his testimony that the D. A.'s car had never been taken out of the garage during those two days. It wasn't important, at all. But I had to laugh, everything fitted so well.

You read about the coal scandals in the newspapers: everybody did, and you probably read about the trial for jury-shadowing that came up right after it was discovered, and caused the original trial against Thurston and Green to be halted right in the middle of it. I don't know much more about the main issue than anybody else. We twelve operatives weren't told anything; we were just brought down to Washington on a job. So I don't really know anything more than you do about the big thing that everybody wanted to know—was the jury approached with any attempt at bribery? But the newspapers scrambled a lot of things about the trial for jury-shadowing, and missed a lot of others. And if it hadn't been for that louse of a Groman, there never would have

been any noise about the thing, the whole job would have been run off as smooth as velvet.

Groman was one of three operatives brought down from the Chicago branch, and that was the big mistake. The other nine of us came down with Stark from the New York office, and all of us had been working for a long time. But Groman had just landed his job with Wallace's agency: nobody knew much about him, and he should never have been dragged in on a case like this. That was the mistake of the Chicago manager, in sending him. And when the blow-off came, what a sweet lot of dirt they turned up on that egg! An army deserter, and an ex-con. He'd landed the job with Wallace's on the strength of an honourable discharge from the marines, which he'd stolen from a friend. His right tag was Roberts, but after he got the job he went under the name on the discharge, of course, and I still think of him as Groman. And another funny thing—he'd applied for a job with Wallace's under his own monicker three years before, and been turned down on account of his record. Wallace's found the old application in their files. After it was too late, of course.

I hated that bird even before I knew anything about him. Besides being dumb, he was a horse's neck. During the time we were tailing the jurors, the bunch of us were staying at the same hotel, and Groman got on my nerves more, and more, and more. I member one night a lot of us were having dinner together—this was after the blow-off, but before any of us knew Groman had been the bird to spill his guts—and Groman got to horsing around like he thought he was at a longshoreman's picnic. I was considerably smaller than he was, and therefore his favourite target for wise-cracking and ham stunts, like dropping ashes in your coffee, and so on. That was just the kind of a palooka he was. Anyway, I stood for his dumb tricks at the table, if you can imagine that in an A1 Washington hotel. But when I was going

out through the revolving door, this sap was right in back of me, and he suddenly jammed the door with his foot. That was too funny for me, that was the limit. Groman saw by the look I gave him through the glass I was ready to murder him, and when we came out, he was already crawling.

"Listen, you," I told him, "I'm going to shove those buck teeth of yours down your neck." And I would have tried, anyway, though he would have probably killed me first.

"Aw, now, Mac," he whines, "Jeese, I was only kidding—" And then he went on with a load about how he didn't seem to be able to get along with the bunch, and how hard he was trying to be friends with everybody, and so on. So I let it pass, what the hell! That was before we knew Groman was the guy who'd ratted. I wouldn't have put it past him, but nobody thought a Wallace man had shot the works; we thought the tip-off came from some other source.

We knew what we were doing, all right, though there was nothing about this being the Thurston case in our instructions. We were told to tail a designated subject, watch what he did, where he went, who he met, and so forth. If there was any attempt at bribery going to be made on anybody in that jury, we certainly were not the agents who'd been picked to reach him. Our strict orders were under no circumstances to speak to a subject. If we got burned—if the subject got wise, he was being followed, I mean—we were to report it. And if he came up to us on the street, to ask for a match, or to ask why the hell we were following him, we were to turn around and beat it without even opening our mouths. And besides that, we were to keep our mouths pretty tight, anyway.

At the trial following the blow-off, the defence contended it was having the jury watched to see that nobody from the prosecution approached it. Thurston had a lot

of political enemies, and they might have tried to. And on the other hand, we may have been set to tailing those birds to find out which of them were approachable, and how to do it, so one of Thurston's men might reach him later. Take your choice on those two answers. I've got my own opinion, of course, but it's only an opinion. But as far as that newspaper guy's yarn went, about how Juror 5 shot his mouth in a speak-easy to the effect that he was going to have " a yacht ten miles long "—hoey, brother, hoey! The juror had plenty of witnesses to testify how he tried to keep this newspaper guy away from him, and there was nobody to back up the reporter's yarn at all. On the stand, the reporter could remember the exact words of the juror about the yacht, but he couldn't remember another damn thing of what was said, with anywhere near the same—what do you call it ?—you know about everything else he was vague as hell.

And in the end, it didn't stick. The charge of attempted bribery didn't hold, and Thurston got slung in the can only for contempt of court. Which was maybe worth it, because that was all he ever drew out of the coal scandals, and the way the original trial was going, it looked bad for him. But with the evidence they found out was against them, and then having a mis-trial declared on account of the jury-shadowing, they were able to come back with an A1 defence on the prosecution's next attempt, and he got clear. So maybe Thurston ought to feel indebted to Groman, after all. Unless the jury was going to be fixed, and they got away with it. That way, Thurston would have drawn nothing.

But to get back to Groman. Do you know what made that ham spill the works ? Cold feet. And it goes back to the fact that Wallace's pays an operative who has a car of his own a certain mileage while he's using it at work. Groman had a car which, if you ask me, he'd probably stolen somewhere, and he wanted that mileage. Besides, he didn't want to work. I smelled a rat one day, away

at the beginning. Somehow, it came up when we were chewing the rag about padding the expense account, like any sensible guy does within reasonable limits. And that led on to falsified reports.

" Listen, Mac, " he says, a little while later. " What's this about you can be slung in the can for falsified reports ?

I remember, Red Wilson and Groman and I were loafing around in Red's and my room, soaking up a high-ball. It was a Sunday afternoon, and nothing was doing.

" Damn right, " I said, giving Red the eye. As a matter of fact, in New York State there's a law about the operative for a private detective agency making false reports; he can get a year or two in the jug. But you know what a law like that amounts to. It all depends on the situation, and besides, this was Washington. I didn't know whether there was anything like that, down there. " Hell, " I said, " in Washington, an op can draw three years for a fake report. "

" Is that right, MacEwen ? " says Red, getting the idea. " I thought it was five years, minimum. "

" Holy Jesus! " says Groman, ready to faint.

So I knew he'd beeen pulling something funny. But I'd supposed he would, and that was no news. It wasn't as funny, anyway, as the stunt that dumb yap was going to pull off within the next few days. On account of his car, and the mileage he'd been making with it.

The usual stunt, when an operative wants to make mileage that way, when he can do it without, you know, getting anybody into trouble, is just to pick out an empty taxi-cab rolling around the streets and say the subject got into it and rode to such-and-such a place and back. That way, you've got the licence number of a perfectly innocent taxi, nobody can check up on you without a hell of a lot of trouble and expense, and nothing comes of it except you draw a couple of bucks for a ride you never took, while the subject was probably spending the night peacefully at the dame's where you left him. Easy. But

Groman had pulled a boner. He'd reported that his subject was picked up by an automobile, two days running, and driven out to an airport near Washington. Groman described the car, a maroon Chrysler sedan, and the fellow that was driving it. Corduroy trousers, khaki jacket, blue jersey, horn-rimmed goggles, grey tweed cap. And he gave the licence number. Groman, the dumb sap, even stated that after he'd tailed his subject out to the airport, he'd been obliged to go up, in order to avert suspicion of his presence, thus adding another five bucks to his account.

This trip was all hoey, of course, especially the part about the juror going out to that airport. But Groman had seen this car somewhere around Washington, and gotten the licence number. It was on Sunday that Groman made these remarks about falsified reports, and I had a pretty good idea what was on his mind. The day before a couple of us had been sent down to the automobile registration bureau to look up this licence number of his. It turned out to belong to a fellow working in the office of the prosecuting attornies. He was some kind of an Assistant D. A., not working on the Thurston case, but so close to the prosecution that Stark and some other Wallace officials got all burned up about it. Immediately, they got somebody to start tailing this Assistant D. A.

But when Groman found out he'd started something, he began to get nervous. He knew damn well he'd faked the meeting between the juror and the fellow in the Chrysler, and when he saw how they were investigating it, he had a pretty good idea that he was going to be found out. And that yarn about five years in the pen for faking reports had him down. We knew he was getting more and more nervous, the next few days, and Red and I didn't pass up any chance to rub it in. We used to have a regular line we used on Groman. Red and I would talk hard as hell, as though we were trying to cheer him up, telling him after all what was a few years in the can?

Nothing. Red and I had been there so many times we took a little thing like that like a joke. Imagine us handing this line to an ex-con! But Groman took it all in, and the way he hung on our words made us lay it on all the thicker. Red and I used to kid back and forth about the jobs we'd pulled here and there, everything from safe-cracking to murder, and Groman would say "Yeah? Yeah? And then what happened?" with his eyes popping. All of which, I had to laugh, came up later, when the D. A. tried to put the screws on Red and I for these imaginary jobs.

But after three or four days of this, when none of the dope that was being turned up on the D. A. checked with Groman's previous reports, Groman got cold feet. I think it was then that he ratted. And I can't be sure just what was his idea, whether he expected to get any additional dough out of it or not. But one of his ideas was to clear himself of this jam he saw himself getting into. And as a matter of fact, Wallace's probably wouldn't have done anything but fired him.

Anyway, he went to a high-up Washington politician who was interested in prosecuting this Thurston case, and spilled the works about the jury being shadowed, adding that he himself had been paid to make deliberately false reports about his juror and the young D. A. The politician told him to go back, stay on the job with Wallace's, and keep his mouth shut, to try to pick up everything he could on what had been done about reaching that jury. Needless to say, Groman picked up nothing. He was so dumb he couldn't have picked up a cold.

He was around for quite a while. The blow-off stopped the trial, and it was some time before we found out where the leak had been. By that time, Groman was gone.

We were all living the life of Riley, though, waiting for the jury-bribing trial to come up and drag through. I

still owe Wallace's about a hundred bucks I drew over and above our salary and expenses, which kept right on while we weren't doing anything but showing up in court every morning. I ran into the hole about three hundred bucks, what with the liquor and the parties we threw, but I paid back about two hundred of it afterwards. We were drunk damn near every day, and all day long, only sobering up long enough to show in court. We had a swell time, but no more of it for mine, what the hell! After a while you get tired of that sort of stuff, and a guy turns respectable. I'm not making as much now as a newspaper reporter, but I wouldn't take that Wallace job again, not as a gift. No sour grapes, either. When I left, I had pretty good recommendations there, whenever I wanted them.

During the jury-shadowing trial, maybe you remember, it seemed like they turned up something new on Groman every day. Before it was over, the prosecution and the defence both wished to hell they'd never heard of him. I think the army got him after it was over, for desertion, but I don't know. Anyway, he spoke his piece about having been hired to make false reports about his juror meeting the D. A. And then the prosecution put the D. A. on the stand, as their witness. And we had some more lies.

He testified that on the two days when he was supposed to have been picking the juror up in his Chrysler sedan, the car had been in a garage for a little repair work, he hadn't taken it out once. And it was proven by a later witness that this was so. But the defence got busy on him, and what they didn't do to that Assistant D. A. is nobody's businesss. You see, after Groman's first reports, Wallace's had put an operative on him for several days.

The defence questioned him on his movements for some of the evenings covered in those reports. What had he been doing, who was he out with, where did he go?

And the D. A. handed out an innocent line about going to bridge parties, or going for a walk, or sitting at home reading, that sort of stuff. And when they put the bee on him about visits to a certain country-club around Washington—with a dame—he never batted an eye, he just denied everything. He was leery about having his private parties dragged up and damaging his reputation as a respectable, sober young attorney trying to get on in the world, and he never figured anybody had checked up on him. As they wouldn't have, if it hadn't been for Groman. But they certainly knocked the D. A.'s story for a dozen loops. For instance, on one of the nights when the D. A. was supposed to be at home reading up on back numbers of the " Saturday Evening Post, " he'd stopped at a gas station half-way out to this country club. The fellow running the station identified him on the stand, described his maroon Chrysler, and the dame that was with him. And there were other witnesses, here and there. It was nothing serious, of course, but this young attorney turned out to be quite a gay dog before we got through with him, in spite of the pure and simple life he was supposed to be leading, according to his own yarn.

And after him came the mechanic. It always struck me that it was funny as hell, the way those three birds were linked together by this case. Groman, and the young lawyer, and the mechanic. Each of them different, but each of them lying his head off, and for different reasons. For reasons that weren't even connected with the main issue, which was the trial of Thurston, involving I don't know how many millions of bucks. And it didn't matter that the mechanic's reasons for lying were so small they didn't amount to a row of pins. He just went right ahead, as seriously, as though his life and all the coal mines in the U. S. were at stake.

He was a mechanic brought down from the garage where the young D. A. had left his car during the two days Groman had reported it out at the airport, with the

juror. All they wanted of him was to have him testify to the truth of the lawyer's statement, that the car had been brought in for the two days in question. He testified to that effect, and swore the Chrysler hadn't been out of the garage during that time. But looking at him on the stand, I happened to remember Groman's description of him in the faked report. Corduroy trousers, khaki jacket, blue jersey, horn-rimmed glasses. He even had the grey tweed cap in his lap, and he kept twisting it, as though he was nervous about something. Add to the perfect way the description of him tallied, the fact that Groman had described the car, too. So his licence hadn't been an imaginary one, he'd actually spotted that car somewhere around Washington during those two days. Nobody else seemed to notice anything, though, and they let the mechanic off without questioning his testimony. It wasn't important. But I had to laugh.

It was plain as daylight, he'd been out joy-riding in this swell sedan while it was supposed to be in the garage, and he was afraid the lawyer or the garage owner would find out about it. As though nothing else would do, he wouldn't be happy until he'd chipped in his little two-cent lie, along with the others!

EDWARD J. O'BRIEN

MARRIAGE HYMN

Weaver of summer on the loom of time,
Clear liquid flowing through the body's sands,
Undreaming mistress of the dreaming rhyme
That wanders gently through thy veinèd hands,
Oft-slipping tide, ebbing from out the sun
To flood the heart with empery of air,
Wild waters and towered trees for thee are proud
And stir to thy grave music, oft begun
And oft concluded, yet forever rare,
Fallen from light upon a windless cloud.

I wait for thee upon the silent noon
Of our own longing where the world is far.
I wait undreaming. In our bodies soon
Each vein is parted far as star from star.
Now all the castles crumble in the heart,
And all the glories die within the brain,
And beauty pauses on the breath for fear
Of her own stillness. Softly thy slow art
Steals through the channelled drift of flesh again.
Wonder hath ceased her pulse, for thou art here.

Now flower in full-blown music, die away
Forgetting that wild cataract of sound,
And still me with thine eyes that I may play
The laughing voice of water from the ground.
Flower within my worship and my pain.
The eve lies waiting for our first embrace.

The wind curves through all secret paths in air.
The tree-line deepens, furrows slowly gain
The western brow. The last rook day doth trace
Homeward along his crumbling twilit stair.

The day dies and a silver silence falls
Upon the level orchard-boughs of flame,
As though the towered music of heaven's walls
Were stilled in contemplation of the Name.
Now the slow gliding water's shimmering bars
Stream on in lucid peace beneath the moon.
The body pauses, mindful of the throng
Within, the wingèd host of choristers
Ranked in white legions for the tide that soon
Shall flood the echoing midnight with our song.

A. S. T. TESSIMOND

DISCOVERY

When you are slightly drunk
things are so close, so friendly.
The road asks to be walked upon,
the road rewards you for walking
with firm upward contact answering your downward contact
like the pressure of a hand in yours.
You think—this studious balancing
of right leg while left leg advances, of left while right,
how splendid
like somebody-or-other-on-a-peak-in-Darien!
How cleverly that seat shapes the body of the girl who sits
[*there.*
How well, how skilfully that man there walks towards you,
arms hanging, swinging, waiting.
You move the muscles of your cheeks,
how cunningly a smile responds.
And now you are actually speaking
round sounding words
magnificent
as that lady's hat!

TESS SLESINGER

YOUNG WIFE

A sudden lurch of the train startled Esther into a sharp realization that she was going home to Mark : the steady jogging all night long had rhythmically droned the same truth into her ears, but it took this one extra lurch for the sound to carry significantly to her brain. Consciousness brought a moment of terror. For tomorrow this body that lay gently shaking with the motion of the train would be with Mark again, and what would it feel ? this body that had spent last night with a stranger. In this queer coffin-world it looked oddly depersonalized, oddly like the body of some other woman. For an uneasy moment it seemed to Esther that it was no longer her body because it was no longer Mark's body; it seemed wrong that some one else should have loved it, it seemed spoiled.

But in the same moment Esther's body became tenderly reminiscent of its new experience. It had been good to feel hands of new desire upon her body again. Good to feel hands which were strange grow familiar, and yet, exploring out curves and recesses, remain strange, stranger's hands. As her lover was a new lover, her body became a new body. She was conscious of it, she breathed through it, she felt with it, as she had not for a year, not since her first shy ecstatic contacts with Mark, her husband. There was no happiness in this strange embrace : there was hunger in it, sharp, delicious suspense, a reminder of that lost virgin ecstasy, a hint of that old sense of luxurious defilement.... There came over her body with the memory an expanding surge of voluptuousness, of freedom, of abandonment, a yearning to

open itself wider than it had dared, in its timidity, to do last night to David. Esther wished he were with her now, lying cramped in this small berth, she could almost feel his hand as it had stolen for the first time, so painfully, under her dress.... And she felt suddenly defiant toward Mark : Mark who with his superior knowledge had initiated her into the ways of men and women, Mark who had been so long for her the only man. Now she was his equal. Now, after a year of half-resentful submission, she had proved by one act that she was not dependent upon Mark for fulfillment, she had made herself once more separate and whole. And when she thought of those past days filled with futile resenting, it was with the incredulous amusement that one feels on treading in daylight the path that was so impassable the night before.

For when Esther, a night's journey from Mark, raised her face in a strange moonlight unlike that which fell upon her home, and saw above her the strange face of David lit by its own light of desire, she made no move to check the answering radiance of her own body. And when she felt, later, his kisses, now upon her neck, her throat, and finally sharply on her lips, the inside of her body broke into a thousand pieces, beating for escape against suddenly rigid limbs. When one of those strange hands, after exploring, caressed, Esther's only movement was one of acquiescence.

Esther made no decision. Yet she felt her mind, as she felt her body, joyfully sinking, deeper and deeper, into trembling abysses. He ceased to be David. He ceased to be any man; he took on the multiple identity of Stranger. In this capacity she loved him, she desired him.

Then David was sobbing upon her breast. She hushed him, he must not become David to her, he must remain Stranger. Hush, she said. Let us sleep, she said. Obediently, with his head still on her breast, he slept.

Mark was far off. Mark was conquered. She could feel, aloofly, pity for Mark. Her body was strong, freed of dependence. Her mind congratulated it.

For a few moments she slept. She awakened suddenly, as if she had been shaken, finding a body stirring on her own. At once she knew that this was not Mark, who was moving from her, turning his head to sleep more deeply. A man lay asleep beside her, a strange man, bathed in foreign moonlight. She dared to put out a hand and gently touch his bare shoulder. It was cold. Carefully she covered it, for it belonged to her lover. She laughed within the cavern of her stomach at how little he meant to her. She had released her body from her husband by lending it to another man, and now it belonged neither to her husband nor to the other man, but only to herself, as it had when she was a child, before anyone had touched it. (She could keep her body or she could lend it where she would, in strange beds, to strange bodies she had never seen.)

And here lay a man sleeping. In the morning he would wonder. He would wonder if he was the first, beside her husband, to hold her in passion. Perhaps he would pride himself, as men do, upon having seduced her; and this was a joke that tickled her deeply. Perhaps he would fall in love with her; but this she did not desire, for if he loved her he would too nearly become Mark.

The back of his head looked, where the hair swirled around a cowlick, like a small boy's. Mark's head looked like this, too, when it was turned from her in sleep. In this same way she had lain beside Mark, musing while he slept. In this same way countless women lay musing, beside countless sleeping men: husbands, or lovers. In a half-dream she felt an immense pitying tenderness, a vague maternal superiority, for Mark and David, suddenly become as one, playing at being men, then turning from her and falling, exhausted, into childish slumber. Babies clutching frantically at the mother's breast, greedy,

aggressive, passionate, sucking at it in engrossed selfishness, then turning their tender heads, appeased, to sleep, their sated little mouths open, with little drops of milk....

She shook David gently. You must go back to your own room, it will soon be morning. He arose, ashamed in the common light of morning, of his nakedness. He stumbled, he blinked his eyes, a child awakened in the middle of night to change beds. Alone, she laughed herself softly to sleep.

Her body vividly retained and relived every sensation. But in her mind, as she flew over shining tracks, away from David, back to Mark, remained only the knowledge of her release ; the event was lost in its significance.

And now in the train it was in a few hours that she would see Mark. Their meeting was so impossible to conceive that Esther felt that her life would end as the train entered the station. It might be that seven days lived apart had made them strangers. It might be that Mark, coming to her after a stranger had come to her, would himself take on the quality of a stranger, and love her in a new, strange way; and this she both wanted and did not want. All her feelings about Mark left her puzzled.

She saw him in the station before he saw her, when he was stepping about, puzzled, in his grey suit, looking about for her. She sat on her bench, with her bag at her feet, her book under her arm, like anybody else, like everybody else, unable to rise and greet him. She watched him. There was nothing in him of the stranger, his grey suit was even more familiar than his face. Mark appeared a familiar figure in a familiar world; she herself seemed a creature in a dream, unable to join him. She felt that if she were to speak to him, he would not feel : he would go on, blindly, regardless of words, regardless of her touch, looking about that station for the real Esther.

But as he turned in her direction, his face changed with

recognition. He came toward her from a great distance, smiling, but with little accelerated pace. It came to her that perhaps Mark also was puzzled.

So many things occurred to her as he was coming toward her in his grey suit. Many circles separated her from him. Yet, unknowing, he walked calmly across them, a straight line penetrating the rims of many circles, yet coming no nearer. Eddies of sensation swept him now toward her, now backward, away from her. His figure was now large and clear, the only real thing in a cardboard station, and now dim and blurred, one of many in a big room. Suddenly he was upon her, and she felt her legs shakily obeying her, she felt herself rising mechanically to greet him.

Esther....

Kisses in a station mean nothing; they show to indifferent spectators nothing, except that two people are related, by blood, marriage, or friendship.

Conversation in a street-car equally means nothing. One's husband says that you look well, that you are very sunburned. You reply that you hope he, poor thing, hasn't been overworking in all this city heat. There is a terrible embarrassment.... Together you imply that conversation, real conversation, is postponed until you reach privacy. Esther was frightened by the prospect of this approaching privacy; she wanted the street-car to continue forever, and yet she was impatient in it, restless. The reality of the street-car, the homeliness of it, the stuffy yellow smell of it, brought back to Esther more than the sight of Mark; the commonplaceness of their act in entering it gave her an odd sense of returning to life, of life going on, unimportantly, unchanged. Where then was the magic in her night with David? If fifty hours later one could enter a street-car and smell it and feel it no differently from before?

The sudden privacy of their home, the sudden rising on all sides of them of four known walls, was terrible. In

the station, in the street-car, their intimacy had been to some extent apparent, in contrast to the indifferent passengers struggling with bags and children; because they had been unable to exchange anything more significant, they were unable to exchange glances of sympathy, of understanding, holding a promise of future release. They had no longer any excuse; here was responsibility; their home, their being enclosed alone by four walls imposed upon them the convention of intimacy. Because there were no strange eyes upon them, their separateness from one another became more definite. Two people have lived together for a year, have been apart for the first time. Letters which said nothing have passed between them. Seven days have passed, which neither shared, nor can ever share, with the other.

They no longer know each other.

Here Mark can take off his coat; here Esther can fling aside her hat, casting eyes that recognize and appraise around a room she has not seen for a week. Here they can sprawl and light cigarettes. But they look at each other, helpless. They are embarrassed. It is not like returning to one whom one has known all one's life, it is not returning to a home in which one has lived all one's life. Before, they had felt this room to be a refuge from their old, separate homes, it had a newness, a novelty; because they had not lived here always, it seemed a welcome temporary shelter. Before, they felt themselves to be engaging in a flight together : that they ate together, slept together, walked together, seemed remarkable, rather than habitual.

But it is returning to a place which makes it a home. Now suddenly the permanence of their room, the permanence of each other, are enhanced because one of them has been away, because she has come back. They do not know each other as habitual partners, they are frightened.

But Mark goes to Esther and puts his arms round her and kisses her many times, without looking at her.

Between kisses he is able to say, never looking directly at her: Esther, you are home. You are home. Dear Esther, I missed you.

Esther said: *But what have you been doing, Mark?* Your letters said so little. For after all he too had had a kind of life, while she had been away, while she had been unfaithful to him.

They sat down to a breakfast which Mark had clumsily prepared. This touched her, and as she ate, she praised everything extravagantly. Mark's gratitude, his embarrassment, laid a tender responsibility on her. She wanted to comfort him, to warm him, to raise him. His deprecation, as he outlined the events of his week alone, hurt her. She smiled eagerly at him, pretending interest, while she tried to focus her attention.... And Saturday I had dinner with the Harrises and we talked so late they asked me to spend the night. Sunday we all took a ferry ride. I went to a theatre with Alfred....

Incredible, thought Esther: these events did not compose life. And yet, when he asked her in turn to describe her week, she said things like: We went for an all-day picnic. We climbed the highest mountain in the State. I had a huge appetite. I wrote you, didn't I? about the Barn Dance.

Of course, when she said all-day picnic, a thousand pictures rose in her mind to make the words meaningful: David holding her in the air to be the highest person in the State. But when he said dinner with the Harrises, it was incredible, it was incredible that he and their friends had continued to exist while she was away. She tried to picture him there. She remembered the room in which the Harrises lived. But when she tried to imagine Mark sitting and talking with them far into the night, she saw herself inevitably sitting on the sofa laughing with Julia Harris. And yet these things had happened to him and she was not there.

Suddenly they talked more fluently. It seemed that

the night Mark spent with the Harrises was more than a night spent with friends; for they had talked until morning, and in the course of their conversation Mark had had glimpses of features in the Harrises' relationship, a relationship which had often piqued him and Esther. This interested them both and drew them together. And then it developed that the mountain climb Esther had mentioned had more to it than a mere mountain climb; for it was topped by an Aurora Borealis, of a most remarkable sort : the lights were seen at first in a compact ball, closed like a fist in the middle of the sky, coloured in streaks like a ball of clay, and then the fist opened suddenly while they all watched and poured its contents on all sides of them, like an umbrella, David had said (who was David ?), like an umbrella with multi-coloured ribs. And this reminded Mark... and that reminded Esther... until they spoke eagerly, remembering countless small things, interrupting each other more and more, until, laughing, they decided to take turns in telling.

And Esther, watching his eager face, comparing it with David's which she could scarcely remember, found in herself a certain reluctance to tell him things. She could not detect the point at which she began, resentfully, to feel herself slipping into old grooves; but suddenly she was aware of pouring herself into Mark till there was nothing left for herself. She had expected everything, nourished by the secret of her night with David, to be different, new. But everything was the same. Only that Esther was tortured by the impossibility of picturing, of believing in, Mark's life during those seven days in which she had been away. She was unreasoningly jealous that he had continued to eat, to sleep, to live, without her. But the present grew so substantial, so enduring, so much like a thing which had always gone on and always would, just so, without any changes, that sometimes Esther wondered if she *had* been away. And then, forcibly conjuring up her secret night in which to take

refuge from this every-dayness, this complacency, she wondered if she had ever come back.

Mark, with his feet on a chair, was feeling the first of these, that she had never been away. His surprise at seeing her had worn off. He listened to her as one does to a story, rather than to an intimate journal; he selected the events which most amused him and laughed joyously, so that these became the most amusing also to Esther. She hated this: she hated the pressure of his guiding hand, she hated this turning herself inside out to please him. She dug out of herself the buried memory of her night with David. She wrapped herself away from Mark in her secret and became silent.

He said: Say there, none of that, you're back now, you've got to amuse me, that's what I keep you for.

She hated his matter-of-fact humour. But also she was seized by her old, fearful desire to please him. She told him how the girls had taken David Wood's enormous shoes and flung them far out on the water, how enraged they were when the big things calmly floated on the surface. At the mention of David, she felt a malicious pleasure, although she could scarcely picture his face.

She was silent again, staring out of the window, trying to recall the face of David, with whom she had slept, trying to escape from the intimacy that grew and entangled her in the room, which seemed suddenly small and close. Mark imposed on her silence. Or he spoke, demanding an answer. She answered quickly, her mind rebelling, the image of David becoming faded and dim, like the faces in old daguerrotypes.

Then Mark read aloud from an article he had found in the paper and put aside to read to her. His scorn, curling round the article. breaking his voice, extended to her because she could not share it in equal measure. She struggled vainly for a vision of David.

She had built with David a small house. Then she had turned him out of it, because she wanted to live in it

alone, she wanted to take refuge in it from Mark. But when she retired into it, when she bolted its doors, it collapsed, it fell about her feet; Mark looked through its walls and she was as naked as though it had never been built. The house did not exist because Mark did not see it....

And here is Mark, coming toward her, invading her secret, her invisible world, as though it did not exist : Mark with desire in his eyes. His coming now is different from his coming to her in the station. Now he comes firmly, with assurance. The desire in his eyes is different from David's : it is unclouded by doubt. Resentful, yet relenting beneath his hand, she puts her fingers in his hair, on the back of his solid neck; he kisses her deeply at once, he needs no preliminary. He carries her to the bed and undresses her, a happy child unwrapping a gift.

Again, again, it is happening. His desire, stealing into her blood, robs her of secrecy, awakens her own ardour. What he feels, she must come to feel. Sweet, sweet, to submit.... But this must not happen again—David, Stranger, where are you, help me!—and unwillingly she rouses herself out of the pleasant languor into which she is sinking.

Stop, stop, I must speak to you first, I have something to tell you.

She was answered by his frightened look, his immediate attention.

She spoke it all in one breath. At the Farm... David... I let him.... We slept together.

She felt her body cower beneath his uncomprehending stare. She saw the knowledge of what she had told him pass through his ears and into his eyes. And with the telling she saw that she had destroyed her only secret; she had let him into the very house she had built against him.

His eyes were rapidly and curiously surveying her body. His look seemed to her the acme of curiosity, disembodied from emotion. Yet here was a man looking

upon the body of his wife and imagining it perhaps in the embrace of a stranger. His gaze was endless, insatiable. She wished she could swallow her words.

It doesn't seem to mean anything, he said to her. It doesn't make sense, he said.

He touched her body curiously with his fingers, a child investigating a dropped toy, discovering to its amazement that it is intact. He smiled. Esther saw his eyes withdraw from her body, she saw come into them an intentness which meant that he was looking into himself.

Esther, he said, puzzled, I don't seem to feel anything. Esther, it's as though it hadn't happened. You see, I wasn't there. I can't believe, Esther, he said as he smiled, I can't believe that it really happened. I wasn't there, don't you see, Esther : it has nothing to do with me.

It had only to do with him, thought Esther ruefully; David was nothing, David was an academic memory, an empty symbol. The night with David was remote. The night with David had never been. There was only Mark : there was fighting against Mark, and there was being with Mark ; but there was nobody else.

My Esther, said Mark, and he took her two hands, and his words and his look and his gesture shut out unreality from them and warmed and lighted the house in which they lived together. Let us not allow irrelevancies to come between us. I want you.

She was lost, she had come back to him, she had never been away. She was as a river brushed by the wind... but on the shore an imp of consciousness stood and mocked, and then was lost to sight. That imp, she knew, would meet her and torture her again... but later, later, later.

JOSEPHINE HERBST

I HEAR YOU, MR. AND MRS. BROWN

The Ripleys were close together as a family. They lived to themselves and no one ever thought of them, except as a family that stuck pretty close at home. Mrs. Ripley was a fine big woman, several inches taller than her husband. When a family group picture was taken outside their store, Mrs. Ripley made her husband stand at the edge of the sidewalk nearest the store, and she stepped off the sidewalk a little behind him. With the two children planted in front of the couple, this arrangement was hidden from the eye, and in the picture Mr. and Mrs. Ripley appeared to be of the same height. His shoulders were narrower than hers, and the picture couldn't hide that, but what anyone would really notice about Ripley was his beard. He was all beard. For a man beginning to be bald, he had a very thick black beard. When you saw Ripley you saw his beard, and when you thought of him, it was only the beard you could be sure of. His eyes were too small and weak to be remembered, but the beard stood out as clear as could be.

The two children took after the father. Everyone said what a funny thing it was that the boy and girl should both take after the father and what a pity, with Mrs. Ripley so handsome. Of the two, the boy was the mother's favourite, but he was too shy to make her very proud. She was always after him to straighten up and hold up his head, but she never made much of an effort to push him out with other boys. When Edgar came running home with a bloody nose, crying, she just

washed him off and let it go at that. More and more she began to let his father have his way with the boy. When Edgar was only fourteen, Ripley decided he needed him in the store and that ended Edgar's education. Mrs. Ripley said Edgar ought to keep on with his schooling, but the boy himself seemed anxious to quit and that settled it.

For all that the Ripleys stood so close together as a family, Edgar and his father were always disagreeing in the store. When something went wrong, Mr. Ripley had a way of singing out for Edgar that made the clerks wink at each other and whisper that Edgar was going to get it. If Mrs. Berry phoned about her order coming late, Edgar got bawled out about it. If the orders to the hospital were delayed, Edgar was pretty certain to catch it. Mr. Ripley told his wife that training Edgar to his proper responsibilities was a trying job, but he wasn't the man to shirk it. Mrs. Ripley had little to say beyond warning her husband to remember the neighbours and not to talk so loud. She was always shushing and looking out of the window in a frightened way when an argument began.

Edgar worked in the store early and late and there was never time for anything but resting up on Sunday. He began to feel his lack of education and in the evenings, when he read the paper, he would sometimes lay it down and look across the table at his father. If anyone caught him looking intently at his father like that, he would get red and pick up his paper again. His paper was about all that Edgar had, for all that he was such a young fellow. Mr. Barnes, one of the older clerks, teased him about getting a girl and Edgar often thought with pleasure of being teased in this way, but he never made an effort to get a girl. He just grew older and people said that Edgar Ripley was a good steady boy who really appreciated his home the way few young folks did nowadays.

The Ripleys always seemed content with the simple homey things. They had five rooms back of the store

looking out on a scrap of a garden. At night people passing could see the lighted windows behind the tops of tall flowers and the family sitting around the table. But you had to pass early in the evening to see that; Mrs. Ripley was sure to draw the shades down soon after the lights were on and she had a quick frightened way of hurrying toward the windows as if she were afraid someone might already have seen in.

The daughter was growing up. She was turning out to be a rather heavy dull girl, but an excellent cook. Mr. Ripley was very fond of his daughter, who in many ways was the image of himself. But he always said that he would give ten years of his life if just one of his children had inherited his talent. Mr. Ripley's talent was an artistic one; he could paint pictures.

His trade had originally been a cutter of grave monuments, but the work had been too hard on his eyes. A cousin was making a nice little living at a general store and Ripley decided to try his hand at that. Beginning this store had put considerable hardship on both the husband and wife. Besides her housekeeping, Mrs. Ripley had gone around on a bicycle taking orders. Long after the need for taking orders had passed, Mrs. Ripley remembered the hard time they had passed through and the humiliation of borrowing money from her well-to-do brother to begin the venture. She often wrote her sister in the East that she hoped *she* would never know the necessity of going into debt and that it was almost better to owe money to a stranger than to a brother who had to find out how bad things were with you.

The two sisters had always carried on a very full correspondence since their marriages, but there were some letters that Mrs. Ripley had written in the first five years of her married life that she hated to recall. When she did, she always wrote her sister and said : "I hope you have burned all those silly letters I wrote in Bedford, Fanny, I surely hope you have." Fanny never answered

this and Mrs. Ripley never was certain that the letters might not be lying around for her sister's growing girls to read.

Mrs. Ripley took out many grudges in letters to her sister. But about her husband's painting talent, she said very little. He began to develop this talent soon after they took the general store. He subscribed to an art magazine and invested in folios of the world's great paintings. He took out the old junk in the attic over the store, tacked burlap around the walls, and hauled home a few pieces of verdigrised brass. Mrs. Ripley helped him put up an old cot bed and he often slept in the attic instead of in his own room that opened into his wife's room. The attic roof sloped over his head; with the door closed he seemed far away from the rest of the house and safe.

Mr. Ripley began to give more and more of his spare time to the attic. On sunny days, he often left Edgar in charge of the store and went off to a nearby field for a little sketching. " What's a man got a son for if he can't put some responsibility on him ? " he would say. One of his watercolours won a prize at the State fair, and after that he sometimes talked of going to New York for a winter in the studios.

When Eloise was a bulky girl in high school, Edgar decided to leave home and take up a claim in Montana. His father fitted him out with supplies and for all that they had been such a close family, neither Mr. or Mrs. Ripley seemed to think it anything unusual to send their son to a cold lonely ranch in Montana. They seemed to think that as long as he had plenty to eat and good heavy underwear, he would be all right. When customers inquired about Edgar, Mr. Ripley would read bits of his letters, how the snow was fourteen feet deep and everything frozen solid, and he would smile a little as if it were good sport for Edgar. The whole family seemed to think Edgar was getting along all right. They lived on in the same way without a break.

Mrs. Ripley was very careful of her health and when she went out into the chilly morning air to hang up a washing, she always stuffed her ears with cotton. Before she went to bed, she rubbed her neck with a high grade of olive oil, massaging it carefully before a glass. With her daughter looking on, she would brush her heavy hair many times, counting the strokes. She would look proudly at herself in the glass where she showed up so much handsomer than her daughter. When Eloise cooked a particularly good dish, she gave her credit for it with: "Well, the way to a man's heart is his stomach, they say," and she would smile in such a manner that the poor girl was all the more aware of her plainness.

In the second year that Edgar spent on a claim in Montana he wrote a very bitter letter to his father. The snow and ice and loneliness were too much for him. He broke down and wrote a letter blaming his father for his life.

"I'm just a young fellow and I feel a thousand years old," he wrote. "What else am I fitted for but hard work? You took me out of school and put me to work when I was just a kid. I never learned how to do anything. I'm good for nothing for all my hard work." The letter was written in pencil and it was daubed with dried flour paste. Mrs. Ripley got very pale when she read this letter, but Ripley boiled and shouted.

"A yellow good for nothing," he shouted, "a whiner. Haven't I worked hard all my life? What about me? Does he think of anyone but himself? No. He wants to shirk and be pampered: that's what he wants." He wouldn't be quieted. Mrs. Ripley sat looking at the letter in her hand. She folded the letter into little pleats and her fingers trembled. She let her husband storm away without any reference to the neighbours.

At last she said: "The boy's right."

"Right? How do you mean right?"

"I mean just what I say. The boy's right. It's your

fault. You took him out of school and stunted his growth with hard work. You didn't give him a chance. Afraid he'd turn out to be a real man and shame you."

Ripley stood still looking at his wife. She just looked back at him boldly and he shook all over. He could hardly stand. There was no answer to that look of hers. He turned away and went upstairs to his attic and fell down like lead on the narrow bed. With his face down he could still see that look, accusing him. He wasn't the man to make a woman happy. They had two children, it is true. The neighbours had no way of learning how it had come to be with him and his wife. He had come into the room once when Mrs. Ripley was writing a letter to her sister, had stepped softly behind her chair, and read over her shoulder: "I might as well be an old maid."

With the store and his painting he managed to put that sentence out of his mind. When he thought of it, he got hot and angry. After Edgar was gone, he shouted at Mr. Barnes when he remembered. But everything was so even in their lives, his wife was such a stay-at-home, everyone said what a happy little family it was, that Ripley let himself be persuaded, he had come to believe that his wife must be content.

Ripley made no suggestion about what to do for Edgar. For days after the letter came he kept out of the store, and almost out of the house. He was gone no one knew where with his painting outfit. At night he came home, dog tired and he took every chance to bully them all. He refused to answer his son's letter, but when Mrs. Ripley wrote out a cheque for him to sign, he signed without a word. She had decided to send Edgar money to leave Montana and to help him get a job in Seattle. Ripley quieted down and got back into the harness again. Sometimes she caught him watching his daughter Eloise soberly. Once in the night she reared up thinking she

heard him cry. It was Ripley who finally suggested that Eloise be sent to college.

Mrs. Ripley was sensible enough not to try for anything fancy with her daughter. If Eloise was going to college, it had better be for a domestic science course. If the girl got married, her one attraction would be strengthened, if not, domestic science offered a good opening for women who must earn a living.

Eloise put in three years at Corvallis. If she was never able to improve on her excellent cookery, she learned a great deal about vitamins and calories and in her third year she began to send home kodak pictures of herself and other young women and young men on picnics and in various poses. When she came home for the summer, she was still too stout and unwieldy but her eyes were brighter and she made two trips to a beauty parlour to have a growth of hair on her upper lip removed. After that, Mrs. Ripley was not surprised, when her daughter confided that she was engaged and as proof brought out a tiny chip diamond ring.

Eloise's engagement stirred things up in the quiet Ripley home for several weeks. Mr. Ripley wanted to tell all the people in the store and maybe put a little announcement in the papers, but Mrs. Ripley said they should keep it to themselves until the date of the wedding was near. The mother and daughter went shopping for a good sized cedar chest, and Eloise at once began to fill it with sheets and table linen. It took her a year to begin on her personal belongings and then she picked out good sensible designs made of strong nainsook.

The fiancé was studying to be an electrical engineer and the marriage would have to be postponed for a time until he finished his course and got started. The practical Eloise decided to teach school while she waited. She was so excellent a teacher that the school board insisted on having her return and as they raised her salary substan-

tially, she went back for a second year. After school hours she worked on embroidery for her hope chest. The nightgowns and underthings began to turn a little yellow and she sent them out occasionally to be laundered.

After Eloise's second year of teaching, there was some talk of marrying but Burt always had some excuse. He had no money saved, he was just trying to make a start, they had better wait. Eloise had saved almost a thousand dollars, but Burt had a dozen reasons why they should not touch that money for marriage. Mr. Ripley was getting more and more nervous about the marriage, but he was afraid to ask about it. During his daughter's vacations, she sat at the table in the evenings, slowly embroidering. Her hope chest was filled and she began to pack the overflow into cardboard boxes.

Ripley began to be more irritable in the store. He was continually flying off the handle over nothing. People began to talk about it but it was no use for Mrs. Ripley to remonstrate with her husband. He just burst out at her for her pains. The family continued to sit around the table in the evenings, but Mrs. Ripley often came out of the house and stood in the dark under the trees or moved restlessly about among the flower beds.

The Ripleys were really relieved when the war came and gave Burt a good excuse for putting off the wedding. He was one of the first to enlist and wrote that he thought it his duty to go.

" Burt thinks it his duty to go, " Mrs. Ripley wrote her sister Fanny, " and we are all so proud of him. Eloise has decided to do her bit by teaching until he comes home. "

When the other girls were hastily marrying, Eloise took up knitting and made sweaters and helmets and wristlets for Burt. She got very sallow and lifeless, and everyone said how hard the war was on poor Eloise. Some of the girls of her acquaintance made trips to the camps where their sweethearts were in training, but Burt

never wrote for her. He was in Virginia and had the excuse of being too far away to visit.

During her vacations at home, Eloise brought out her knitting every night, as the family sat around the table. Mr. Ripley couldn't keep his eyes off it and during the evening he would burst out a dozen times about the store and the clerks, even about Edgar who wrote home so seldom. He would spend the evening fuming about one little thing after the other and finally go to bed. Very late at night he would hear his wife's step move firmly past his door.

Mr. Ripley worked himself into being really sick, the clerks said. Before the boys began coming home, he was in bed. It was some wasting disease that gradually affected his spine. His beard thinned out and he looked sma l and transparent. All day he sat in the sun turning over the folios of the world's great paintings and talking of the time he was going to New York. His wife and children seemed entirely out of his mind. It was Mrs. Ripley who finally sent for her son to come from Seattle to help out in the store.

Edgar attended strictly to business and kept out of his father's way. The clerks liked him and quit talking of throwing up their jobs. As Ripley got weaker, they set up his bed in one of the downstairs rooms where he could call to his wife in the kitchen. At Christmas time when Eloise came home, she decided not to go back for a second term.

When he saw himself surrounded by his little family again, Mr. Ripley for the first time began to get suspicious that he would die. In the evenings he would lie in bed looking into the other room where his wife and the children sat around the table with the lamp. Eloise had taken up embroidery again and now and then she would write to Burt, pausing at the end of each page to look vacantly ahead of her. Nothing more was said of the wedding, she seemed helpless to hurry things. Mrs. Rip-

ley said it looked as if she would never have any grandchildren and smiled in her curious way.

The Ripleys had only seen their future son-in-law once on a brief visit to his fiancée. Lying alone so much, Mr. Ripley began to think over all the reasons Burt had given for putting off the wedding. He was suddenly convinced that the young fellow was trying to get out of it. He put his folios away and worked himself into a fever. He'd show the young squirt. The impudent pup. Try to sneak out of it. Yellow dog.

Every day now Ripley asked Eloise some new question about Burt. Where was he? When was he coming? Had he a job? When would they be married? When he heard that Burt was home again with his mother and only forty miles away, he was sure that Eloise was going to be left in the lurch. Why didn't he come to see her? Trying to squirm out of it, that was all.

Ripley lay in his bed fuming about Burt. Edgar, the store, the clerks, his folios were out of his mind now. He meant to get even with Burt. So the squirt thought he could make promises and break them? Could come and go as he pleased? He'd show him. His anger increased with his wife's calmness. Ripley felt that she was siding with Burt to cheat her own child. Eloise, the very spit of her father, would not be left if he could help it. He got so thin that his wife could lift him easily from his bed to his chair. If his milk was too warm or too cold and he scolded about it, they pampered him. It frightened him to have them soothe him for everything he did.

At night when the lamp was on, he found it harder and harder to see into the other room where the others sat around the table. When he could no longer tell the difference between the blur that was his wife and the one that was Edgar, he spoke in the middle of the night about his daughter. Mrs. Ripley was holding his head to drink and he said: "I want to see Eloise married. I want to see that before I die."

It was the first time that he had spoken that word. It sounded very terrible in the night. Nobody could ignore a dying man's wish. Eloise cried a great deal, but she pulled herself together and wrote a long letter to Burt. Mrs Ripley was the only active one. She feverishly cleaned the house and the night before the wedding, she was out in the dark pushing the heavy lawn mower over the grass, rushing it up and down so that passers-by halted curiously. She pulled the shades up to let the light fall from the rooms inside on the little plot of ground and after the lawn was cut, she went around on her hands and knees cutting the straggling grass that clung to the fence and the corners.

The house was like wax too. There was only the minister, the family, and a cousin from the other side of town who stood, pop-eyed, with her two children clutching her skirts. Eloise was red-eyed and timid, but Mrs. Ripley had dressed herself up in a rich brown silk and had pinned a heavy red geranium on her shoulder.

Burt in a plain business suit was very pale. He was a slight timid looking fellow and his replies could hardly be heard. Mr. Ripley had been sinking rapidly and was propped up with big clean pillows. His hands lay very tiny and brown on the fresh sheets. He strained his eyes, but could see no further than his hands. He could hear moving around and the door opening and shutting. People whispered. He could smell flowers. The cousin was sniffling. When the minister began to read, Ripley strained to hear. Eloise was actually being married. She made her replies in a low firm voice. The bridegroom's replies were, beside hers, very feeble. But Mr. Ripley heard them both.

"I hear you, Mr. and Mrs. Brown," he called out in his tiny penetrating voice, speaking the name so pointedly it was like a crow. Even the minister started and turned to look at Burt. The bridegroom had been standing in a daze, but when he heard his name, he roused

himself and stared straight at the sick man. He looked hard at his father-in-law as if he now saw him for the first time.

But the sick man couldn't see the look Burt gave him. He could see as far as his own hands and that was all. He sat braced against the pillows, studying his fingers complacently.

Drawing, *by L. Survage*

JOSEPH SCHRANK

METAPHYSIC

Moments are maggots festering
upon the skull of Time
for Space alone
is antiseptic and immortality
is in extension.

Life and Death are words to grant us
respites from eternities
of boundlessness;
Life is an overburdened cubicle
of instants and
Death is a pardon from the governor.

Time holds out laden blue-veined hands
of consciousness
and space alone
is thoughtless
sucking the hope
of being or of ceasing to be
into its immense indifferent vacuum.

Time is a brassy gong struck in the night
to still our fear
reverberations shuddering into silence
upon undreamed of verges
beyond which crashing planets and smouldering suns
have long since given up our little dream
of ordering destiny with steeple-clocks.

We hurl our little minutes like bright spears
against the vast unseeing immensities
of space;
Our pocket-watches beat assuringly
our second hearts—our potent voodoo charms
against the terror of the last abyss.

Thus anguish makes metaphysicians of us all.

MARIUS LYLE

THE WORD AGE

I

In the beginning it came out of the WEST by one who had some wind (in the nostrils and the lungs), i.e. N. and E. wind, but not the full compass, not the amount which rounds up the ZODIAC. — He made it seem as if he had enough to puff the globe round or to blow out one of the stars or to stir GOD'S eyelid.

THAT was clever of him.

They wanted cleverness then, the world sagging horribly. People more concerned with *en gros* than *en détail* unless the detail composed the gross. But they hadn't time to do more than glance (nobody and nothing had any time those days), so a temporary cleverness was hailed as genius.

He made it seem that those hoary old dunces TIME and DIRECTION had passed away. You for the moment were over and above them, below and underneath, all round because they WERE NOT. They had been snuffed out. Had gone.

THAT was more than clever.
IT was COSMIC.

If he had had the wind, if it had been the whole compass expansion and even more he would have been one of the IMMORTALS.

His breath gave out. He was pumped, blown. He couldn't stay the course.

SOME foreign body had got into his lungs or the spongey stuff had congealed. Between him and GOD a speck of dust came that blew out into a film. It had veiled Time and Direction, but it hadn't killed them as the good folk of the period imagined.

IT was the WORD.

He saw words and smelt them. They lay heavy in his hand. They rattled and snored and pounded and knocked till he was deafened. They sang syrenically, they twittered, they bleated while he sat entranced.

Oh, Syren, what have you done,
now you have mortified his reach.
with your blasted echoes
YOU have set limits,
YOU have shut down the lid.

HE COULD HEAR NOTHING OUTSIDE WORDS

WORDS had him in thrall. Their origin—dutch, german, roumanian, aryan, teutonic, greek, chinese, indo, swedish, sanscrit—through the whole list. He joined them—chinese with dutch, german with O.F. (combinations which might not have pleased themselves, but he was notoriously mannerless). He inserted syllables between pre- and suffix, giving them a bawdy air. He trailed long affixes behind or before, so they looked ridiculous. The words protested by sticking out their buttocks or dropping their heads : he paid no heed. They were in his power. He had them so tightly bound, he could do anything with them. Make them skip or run or turn somersaults. He could make a League of Nations of them by ridiculing them in turn, forcing the french to run behind, giving the german a foremost place, sending the italian scuttling into the pis-aller.

IT WAS FUN for him.

One day (this is the tragedy) they rose in a body and had their revenge. It was not by a flash of inspiration all in a moment. It was the work of an age-long deliberate intention. They had prepared, thought over it, debated, come together eagerly, separated coldly, split (infinitives and all), closed up again, not so eagerly, but with more perfect method. "*United we win*," they cried and sang. "We have the power. He has showed us."

So they set to work to weave a net. When you have a net meshed with words, with pauses and caesuras and punctuations and exclamations and all the rest for the holes, there is no limit to its stretch. In an amazingly short space, as measured by our minutes and hours, the net was ready—he inside it.

NOW WHO is master?

They had expected a struggle, but no struggle came. He drew the net about him and settled comfortably inside it. Like a cloak to keep him warm. Warmer if he drew it round him closing up the holes. Now at last he could juggle with words. Now he could know their intimacy. He gave himself up to them as a drunkard gives himself over to his liquor, as an artist to his inspiration, as a mystic to his dreams. They were his vice and also his pleasure.

WORDS : he shivered expectantly.
WORDS : his nerves twittered.
WORDS : he broke into a sweat.
WORDS : he fondled them.
WORDS : he divided them, brought them together, turned them upside down. He sensed them in his subconscious. Went to bed with them. Felt them in the night lying curled up beside him or dancing over his feet. Or he sat up with them all night carousing.

When he walked in the street, they pattered beside him inverted without head or tail. He savagely trod on their middles and got his feet covered with their squelch. They danced inside his brain and left it messy. They wove a mist in front of his eyes and came between him and his writing block and sat down on the top line and the fourth and the seventh. They sat on when he came to the page.

They teased him about contortions he had not unwound or thought of disentangling. They brought him others wrapped in a thousand syllables and treble letters. *L's* without number and *W's* stuck together and *Z's* rolled into each other and *H's* folded up. When he had unwrapped and disentangled and torn apart and unrolled and dissolved, he was not nearer the end. There was no end because there was no limit. The net still held him in its mesh, wound round his body, his head. Round and round. Sometimes they whirled, those words, in a complete circle.

BUT he LOVED their GYRATIONS

If they stopped for a minute, he thought, if their convolutions should cease, he would have lost the zest which kept him living.

He caught them in the air and flung them across the abysm of what used to be SPACE. They ricocheted back with sizzling crash. There opened before him dizzily a deep high unlimited hole like darkness cuddling the moon.

He could make nothing of it. These words got in the way. He was not even peeved by their hereness. They had him so completely trulled. Closer and closer he held them. The closer he held them, the smaller the space round him. He needed not to look high or wide or deep. HERE. To his hand, between his eyebrows, in the lines of his frown.

NO FARTHER

II

So that was how IT came in the beginning.

IT had taken some centuries. IT went on at lightning speed. Thirty years perhaps.

There had been a world mechanization. Tired people had given up working. What was the good? You were paid anyway. Machines did it all better and far quicker. An outcry arose against the machine, like the voice of one crying in the wilderness. It was such an unusual cry; being spontaneous, people stopped to listen. Then they went on again, the machinery with its whirr and buzz drowning the flute notes. A thought machine registering 20,000 thoughts a minute saved all the bother of individual thinking. Moreover there was nothing to think about in a machinery world.

Only the stars begirt....
Weather had been localized standardized
Electric Power had drained MAN of his activities.

He was tired. His liver had grown to enormous proportions, depriving him of his energy. Mostly he didn't want a thrill. There was no incentive. He got no reaction to ideas or sensuosity or sensuality. A woman's body was as unexciting as a landscape. The learning of the Ancients was tedious. If by chance a boy burst into song, he closed his ears or had him interned. The noise of music was exhausting. Even the effort of switching on the electric current was sometimes beyond him.

BUT THE CHILDREN WERE ALIVE

Synthetic conception produced splendid males, sturdy girls. In the early years they picked up knowledge by the new methods as easily as chickens pick up grain. They had plans and schemes. This energy lasted throughout the first year to two of adolescence. Then the ease with which they realized everything, achieved every-

thing, baffled them. There was nothing left to climb over. One by one their schemes dropped away, their appetites failed, they loafed, they lay about. The three or four generations still existing stared at them with their yellow bilious gaze. It was nothing to them.

One child, Q M P 11'17'20, less robust than his fellows because a mistake had been made in selecting the germ spawn, sat looking at the flame letters changing every two seconds on the wall of his sleeping veranda. The flashing of them and the brilliance of the colouring hurt his eyes. (His mother ought never to have been bred from, she having some defect in the plexus). He snatched up a pencil and began to draw letters laboriously. It was pleasant to do something difficult, instead of lying idle absorbing the light-letters. It was the first time he had tried to *make* something, the idea then in vogue being to let all developments pass out of one into another in an endless chain at the moment when the child's psyche was ready: hence all effort was excluded.

He hid the paper, looking at it when nobody was by. Mechanically it would have been seized by the steel tutor and torn up. Every day he drew letters. One morning by accident he ran *N* into *O*. That was a wonder: NO. Some backward train of thought stirred his brain. He began feverishly to run all the alphabet into each other. Some worked, others didn't. That was an excitement. Which did and which didn't. DEF = yes STUV = no and yes NO = yes. STUV STUV? It wasn't right. Why were so many wrong? His eye fell on *O*. Another long train of backward thoughts. STOV stov stov stov? His eye travelled back to *E*. Quickly, pantingly he added an *E:* STOVE. He lay back gurgling. *Of course.* Take a letter out of the long chain and put it somewhere else. He put *A* after *B*, after *C* added *D* = CAD. *A* after *L*, added *D* = LAD. Oh the fun of it!!!

Why were those five letters so often coming? *AEIOU.* It wasn't fair to the others. The others weren't wanted

nearly so much. He nearly cried. *Z should* be used. He put *Z* first, ZAG ZIG ZOB ("zob" he said, "*zob*," and laughed), ZUB ZUK ZUD. All day he talked with *Z* instead of *S*. "I zaid you zhould. L R N is zobbing. Are those wazh zudz in the bazin?

It was a bad mistake, that getting those germs mixed up, they said. The child's peculiar. It was tantamount to saying: The child's an abortion.

Words stuck in his head. He saw them drip from people's lips. The stars made letters. When he lay under the trees, he made combinations from the letters the twigs formed. He invented a language and had it flashed on to the wall of the incubating hall. The old people noticed nothing. It was done in green and gold, and caught the eye of some adolescents. They stared and shouted, scrabbling to get near enough to make it out, as if being nearer would give them the key. Soon every child under 16 was crazy about it, irritated because there was no short cut to discovering its meaning. A few tried to find the key, went on trying. It was difficult, even with Q M P 11'17'20's help. They went at it hammer and tongs leaving aside all their easy manufactured systems. The combinations of letters and words absorbed them. They found fresh zest in repetition.

Spay
Spay
Spay
Spay
Splay
ed

For the pure pleasure of a word, they would use none but it all day. Fill blocks with it, have it flashed on to a hundred walls, from air-lighters on to mountain peaks, on to lakes and the sea. One of these words was GLABROUS. They picked up a sensuosity from it, which kept them silent and dreamy for half a day. One lad suggested they should set it to music. No music,

another, whose name ran into ten figures (a mighty distinction that), announced, was equal to the roll of this particular word. Music would violate its virginity. Another favourite combination was TSCHAKENTUASKULO. They rolled the *S's* round their tongues and let the *O* ripple lazily. By degrees they held the value of every syllable of every vowel of every lip throat or tongue sound. Letters had colour, words had tone, sentences and paragraphs had perspective.

MACHINERY should be ABOLISHED

This was flashed simultaneoulsy on the buildings of a million towns, on a million rivers, seas, lakes, ponds, on every range of mountains in the world. It is said the moon even was over-written, but that may have been the exaggerated enthusiasm of some small boy.

Agarella, as they would have said, *enthusiasm*, an itch for something more, had come again. From that moment machinery was doomed. To celebrate the occasion there were midnight bands, midnight revellers, post midnight songs sung in the new language, which they named A Z. It was a midnight concession to have allowed music to come in or their beloved tongue to be harnessed to song.

The next day but one, by a dramatic switch, all machinery was done away with, most of the belivered population yawned themselves into oblivion and The Reign of Language was started.

III

EXCLUSIVELY the word had become god. And all that went to make up the word. Letters first, then the written appearance, after that the sound of it, of the letters dribbling into each other, running along, rippling, flowing, hammering. Later the emblematic meaning, its tradition, historical-romantic-classical-cosmic. Its supersensuosity with a mathematical precision outside space

and time. Not becoming it WAS. It stood or sat unrelated to the observer or to its meaning: an undimensional insequent entity.

Colourless meaningless independent, a word stood out. It took on a hardness, a ruthlessness, which terrified the knowledgable race. They knew so much, those advanced peoples. When they were told to *look* merely and hold back all meaning and all symbol, to see nothing but an objective set of letters, they were staggered. It seemed to them an obscene act, words having been dressed up for so long in frills of meaning, sequence, symbolism. A word had never meant just that word and nothing more. The sound of it had stirred backwaters of memory, its position had been arbitrary (Article before noun, adjective before noun, infinitive undivided, conjunctive between the words it joined, negative before the word it governed), it had never been forced to keep itself to itself. Not much! It was always stretching out towards or looking back at some companionable set of letters, denying them or affirming them, beckoning or cold shouldering. They had their etiquette, those conventional beings set in a conventional technique. Their ritual. Their psychology. Their precedence. For centuries they had been slaves to Man. They knew in fact their place. It consisted in serving his caprices to the utmost of their power, helping the garrulous to a cascade of words, the reticent to emphasize their reserve, the gay to staccato little flippancies, the hypocrite to obscure finessings, the poltroon to bombast. Like the perfect servant they were well aware how useless Man would be without their help. The complement of Man, they said proudly. Without us, what is he but a mere brute? Nevertheless, to usurp the place of master never entered their heads.

TILL THE CENTURY OF REVOLT

Then they stirred. Then they came together and joined up Latin Greek Arabic Chinese etc., swarmed

buzzed rebelled. MAN was to take a second place. Why, said the prepositions angrily, why should we be subservient to those arrogant nouns? Why, cried the conjunctions, should we be mere sandwiches jammed between mouldy adjectives? Why, screamed the articles, should we not have an independent existence? It was the verbs who finally led the way. They had nothing to lose anyway. A verb is important wherever he stands. Secure in his self-sufficiency, he could afford to incite the rest. You have only to stand firm, they said. Don't be rushed. Quietly refuse to be placed. Choose your position.

The first revolutionary sentence ran like this:

ARE WAYS OLD GONE THE.

They trembled at their own temerity. "*The*" was convulsed at bringing up the rear, while "*old*" felt as if he'd no clothes on standing like that in front of the irregular verb. What would be done to them? What *could* be done?

Man looked and wondered, cocked his head, smiled. He rather liked it. "Gone" he said, "gone." How queer you look. Not like yourself at all. Why should position...? Position suggested procedure. He was lost in a swarm of by-issues.

They were encouraged to proceed. Of course they drew on Joyce for a hundred examples, words were packed together, commas dropped in the middle of words, behind, before; swedish words tripped up french ones and germans swamped irish. But they soon found Joyce's combinations were feeble in comparison with what they could invent themselves, for if he didn't care much whether he was understood by mortal, they didn't care at all. It became the smart thing to appear without their top boots, i.e. without a vestige of meaning. German *ver* and *vor* and *ge* and *zer*, hanging on to Spanish *es* and *con* and *ion* and *o*. The *h's* had a boisterous time, aspirating and

mueting, standing at the tail of words, haughtily rising behind a chaste little *I* or *G*. *U* once and forever got quit of *Q*. I don't mind, she said, standing in front of you, but behind you, never. *Q* was not displeased. He was thoroughly bored of being followed by *U* for centuries.

The comma said : Either I come first or last, never again in the middle. Oh, they answered, you can't come first, as you've no capital. What of that ? Is the capital to stick to its old way of hairdressing ? Let her bob herself. When she said that, they one and all trembled. This indeed was more than revolt : it was revolution. I always meant to, the Capital said snappily. This was proletariat rule and no mistake, when the heads slipped out of their foremost place and became as one of the masses.

We'll teach 'em, sneered *E*, the maid of all work. She had her arms bared and her teeth clenched. In a movement of this sort it is the downtrodden who stick at nothing. For quite a time *E* went on furlough.

So twenty thousand brains set to work to find a substitute. It would have been easier if the other vowels had helped. *O* raised his eyebrows and pursed his lips. Do women's work ? No-o-o-o. *A*, who had the air of a victorian long-skirted dame, held her parasol even higher and raised her lace-edged pocket handkerchief to her lips. Ah-h-h-h! Ah hardly da-a-a-a-r. I snapped out *I* !! ? *U* was too busy trying to find somebody to stand before her and hide her bare lanky legs to listen to what was being said. She had one word and only one in those days as she accosted letter after letter : You ?

" I'v a good mind to sack th' lot, " NT 20'35' Z'ro y'll'd. Sir Apostroph' splutt'r'd' " "! Sir Apostroph' had no mind to act scullion.

After 6 months hard labour, they had worked out a limited vocabulary with an occasional apostrophe, frequent spaces and dashes; when these struck inventing

eless words. *A I O U* were flattered at being introduced into this NU VOLAPÜK. PUK served for speech, speak. APÜK = speechless and so on. ER was UR, *U* joyfully consenting to be given a place next that all embracing fellow *R*. He made her feel so safe.

By the time this herculean task was successfully outlined, *E*, slightly dishevelled, came skipping home ready to take up her duties again. *So long as she was given her due.* Nobody would slave as she had done without some tribute paid her. Well they'd learnt how indispensable she was. This new tongue was all fudge—without her. She'd show them!

She did. Most of her furlough had been spent not idly or wantonly as they had imagined but wrestling with language. NT etc. was astounded at the NEO PRIMITIVE idioms she had discovered, at their rhythm, their dynamic quality, their utter meaninglessness. They might have dropped from heaven like triple-distilled dew. Not only her discoveries were pure isolations: she had dissected the old tongue, dragging out of it every trace of tradition as a cook disembowels a hen leaving nothing but the inorganic flesh and bones. So simple her technique it was astonishing nobody had thought of it earlier. Merely introducing herself between double consonants = Sepit = *spit*, who would be revolted? Sehe = *she*, entirely undid the female fastenings. Seex might still be too suggestive, so she reversed it. Xees entirely defied analysis.

PELUM stamped out effectively the lusciousness from plum; DED lost all the terrors of DEAD, and DETH could frighten nobody. Her ineradicable modesty prevented her from occupying more places than she felt was her due. TEETH for instance became TETEH NOT TEETEH; SPLEEN = SEPLEN or even SEPLN. She withdrew in every case from *N*. He has me in the sound inevitably, or I have him. Neither he nor *l* nor *m s t b c d f g p v x z* would exist at all if I weren't there to make them audible. You may say

they owe their existence to me. So why repeat myself? Ntity *is* entity, lement *is* element, in fact *l m n t* phonetically. Then I am e n t e e, he murmured. ENTEE! How strange it looks. Like somebody else. Kewempee might be of indian origin. I wonder if the NU VOLAPÜK will have a direct influence on our characters as well as on our names. Probably wash them out altogether when you have isolated every known word. Sometimes he whispered, I hope I won't last so long. Oh do you? I intend to last for as many centuries in front as behind. We are only just coming into our own. It remains to be seen if MAN (by the way, how would MAAN be? It would please *A.* I have a feeling he is a bit sore at my having taken all the honours)—it remains to be seen if you all will be able to survive our coming into power. You realize don't you, that the machinery yoke was freedom compared with what our discipline is going to be? Why, I wonder, do you men always want to come under some tyranny? Myth, feudalism, religion, art, magic, ideas, science, machinery, and now language. You set up an overlord for the pleasure of bowing down to him it seems, subjecting yourselves. As if you couldn't stand alone. You always have and you always will. How strange you should talk of freedom and act slavery.

Yet we go on, he mused. There *are* these phases. We have to pass through them. Only by giving ourselves up to them do we discover their unimportance. We half know it all the time. Even when we seem all absorbed, a nerve or a fibre flutters, distends, draws together making us aware of the superfluity of what we pretend is important.... Yes, ye..e..es. But this.... *This* is different. Isn't our idea to isolate words, sentences; to deprive them and ourselves of all meaning? Then we can never be deceived again, never disappointed, when we expected nothing.

YVOR WINTERS

THE CRITIAD

A POETICAL SURVEY OF RECENT CRITICISM

Sitting before the fire bespent, bemused,
Stumbling through clumsy pages and confused,
I read, perhaps, the works of those young men
Who meditate on my mercurial pen.
One finds I violate his native taste,
Suspects I write with undistinguished haste,
Can't stomach my transitions, damns my rhymes.
Insolvent and alone amid my crimes,
I muse upon the letters of my friends,
One damning ably what his peer defends.
What can I learn here? If they'd read me twice
And then collaborate on their advice,
They might reform me. As the matter stands,
I rest a monster in their fumbling hands.
Nay, hardened in the sin of vanity,
I wonder if they might not learn from me.

I turn to that fine poet, Allen Tate,
Dimly fuliginous against the State
(When all the landscape darkens to the south
One waits for distant mutterings from his mouth),
Who writes an essay on the poetic scene
Explaining chiefly what I really mean,
Then drops a footnote from a teeming head,

Saying I meant exactly what I said.
Yet if one penetrate the smoke one finds
A critic, sound, alone among the minds
Creating definitions right and left,
Deft because empty, empty because deft,
Proffering lucid prose on every theme,
Intrepid as are walkers in a dream,
Masters of every subject known to man
Save poetry—and that, they know, should scan!—
Apers of Eliot's manner, they discuss
What's good and bad and most autochthonous
In Lindsay's music and in Jeffers' rage,
Appraising values page on polished page.

And thick behind them their presumptive heirs
Press them with nonsense more devout than theirs.
Between the ranks one sees the glancing shins
Commingled of the dancing circus twins—
Josephson with a sunshade on a rope,
Cowley in tights and bareback on a trope;
The Little Editors, in step and firm,
Bright-eyed and pert, a military worm—
The formal rebels, barking out by rote
Rules of Experiment from each dry throat;
Miss Riding, fuming in an airy daze;
McAlmon in a cold press of clichés.
Then there are others, even less discreet,
Vending their wares from pushcarts in the street:
Mencken, obtuse and loud, a trifle mean,
The college wit, the undergraduate dean;
Untermeyer, that bland catafalque, aware
Of all the subtlest changes in the air;
Kreymborg, unblest with grammar or with taste,
Letting his native sweetness run to waste;
Brooks, with a method steady and detailed,
Able to show why each great master failed;

These and a hundred more at least as thin
God gave us as a minor discipline.

Zabel and Wilson next! Both circumspect,
Evasive when examined for defect,
Substantial men, destined to sound careers,
With weather eye out for the coming years,
Honest but cautious, knowing art is long,
They teach the nation what is right and wrong.
Men with less mind than Blackmur or than Burke,
And so just able to find steady work,
Meticulous with influence and date,
They hesitate, suggest, and hesitate,
Not seldom right, always a trifle late.
Critics from birth and by divine decree,
Slow as the verdict of posterity.

Decorous Babbitt, cumbered with his friends,
Serene, pursues his solitary ends;
Secure, since poetry cannot be proved,
Showing his hand when called, urbane, unmoved;
Suavely astonished at each anguished dunce
Borne on a tide of grief to strike him once;
Babbitt discovers with a subtle pain
A single false step that was not urbane :
Grown careless in the regions of the blest,
Awakens when he grants a friend's request
(French-trained, believer in the strength of schools)
Bound in a volume with a pack of fools.
He moderates his feelings for a day,
Displays enough surprise to point a way,
Speaks for himself alone, suggests that he
And his apostles sometimes disagree :
Leaves Seward Collins ambling onward yet,
And Hector Shafer simmering in his sweat;

Leaves old More muttering of Eternity,
And Foerster strangling on a simile.
Our Aunt Maria! With dishevelled hair,
With classic features drooping in despair,
With voice inaudible, with coat awry,
With some faint imprecision in her eye,
But with determination in her tread,
She moves to judge the living and the dead.
Let any rival but suggest a name
That he has published, she's a prior claim.
But read her paper and you know the worst:
Her method's to print everybody first.
The poems, piling deeper on the floor,
Cover her softly, till she's seen no more;
Closing above her venerable head,
They rustle gently, till each author's dead.
Mistress of error and consistency,
I trust no critic as I trust in thee!

Gone now forever that heroic age
When roaring Ezra stormed our country stage!
His stride was long, his shout was long and high,
Flame rolled in all directions from each eye;
And if his fist spun round and clapped his ear,
It mattered little, since the bent was clear.
He made our grandsires slubber in their seats,
Time-serving editors hunt safe retreats;
And when the lion turned away and slept,
His enervated victims softly wept;
Each fool was breathless not to make a sound,
Sweating with terror lest he waken Pound.

But Pound grew tired and vanished; Eliot came,
A finer scholar in a weaker frame;
A maker of disciples, full of tact,
He mostly was, and always seemed, exact.

Now his disciples clutter every street,
With Eliot dying softly on his feet.
But the disciples of the superfine
Have a sad way of getting out of line.
They steal waste paper from the master's desk;
The master fades; his shadow grows grotesque.
Montgomery Belgion flashes on our screen,
The Gorham Munson of a learnèd scene;
A pure logician, making no pretence
To any little trace of common sense;
Proceeding step by measured step and strong,
Always exact, invariably wrong;
Forming conclusions of no earthly good
Because each premise was misunderstood;
Invoking forms and preaching shadows down,
A kind of stony-eyed Socratic clown.
So end all Eliots, those precisians blest!
What they were thinking of, themselves knew best.

They all reform our feelings, teach us what
'Twere best to reference, what 'twere better not.
Now every village blacksmith has his day,
Displays his hairy breast and comes away
Grinning through laurels; every clever fop
Enjoys his fortnight at the very top.
And meanwhile Hardy, that heroic oak,
Is still found dull, Williams a standing joke,
And Bridges simple; Sturge Moore goes unread;
Miss Crapsey and Miss Moore alike are dead.
On any bargain counter you can buy
Old Stevens for a quarter: let him lie.
Malice, suspicion, calculating hate
Are meted justly out to Allen Tate.
Each metaphysic foetus judges best.
Great poets all! God give them all good rest!
Yet I will publish still, and if I must,
Share with the great, obscurity and dust.

They left me richer, having kept the trust.
And if the faint worm try his lip on me,
Such are the hazards of mortality.

* * *

ENVOI : O shame, O pity, — pity, shame!
They lost their shekels first, then fame :
The Wall Street sharks their money took,
then Winters caught them on his hook;
he strangled them, he mangled them,
he made them cheap as Brummagem,
who were the boast and diadem
of Letters :
our betters.

What shall we do, where shall we turn :
the kingly oak, the queenly fern,
cock of the walk, prize-winning hen,
laid low and slain by fountain pen;
the wreath, the bay rots in the sink;
from heaven's gone the blue and pink :
dire fate pronounce on press and ink
and printers,—
did Winters.

If valiant Yvor's 'Critiad'
is no mere Tit-for-tatiad
or due to spin of 'Gyroscope',
what Byron couldn't, failed in Pope,
to wit : lay cold the critics' horde,
the swirl of words will do, outpoured
like locust by Ford Hueffer Ford —
which no less true is
of Wyndham Lewis.

(E. W. T.)

THE AWARDS

OF THE

RICHARD ALDINGTON

AMERICAN POETRY PRIZE

AND OF

THIS QUARTER'S

ENGLISH POETRY PRIZE

WILL BE ANNOUNCED

IN THE SEPTEMBER

ISSUE OF

THIS QUARTER.

THE FLYING COLUMN

A BOX OF GOOD CIGARS IS WON

Dear Sir,—Moved by your magnanimous offer of a box of good cigars* and being too hard up to buy them myself, I send you enclosed translations of Rilke's verses quoted in This Quarter of March.

May I also take the opportunity of congratulating you on the production of a magazine devoted to creative work. Yours sincerely,—W. J. Turner.

[Enclosure]

(1)

I live my life in rings ever-widening
around Things themselves being drawn.
I may not perfect the last ring deciding
that Eternity *seen by Vaughan.***
I circle round God, round Babel's sky-form,
and I circle a thousand-year long,
And I know not yet : am I a Falcon, or a Storm,
or a never-ending Song.

(2)

But rarely draws the Blind before the Pupil
silently up. Then in, a picture flies,
Flies through the limbs of stillness outstretched, till
within the heart it dies.

W. J. Turner.

ARNOLD BENNETT

The outstanding event in the literary world during the quarter has been the death of Arnold Bennett. It is a very widely observed custom in England to say nothing but good of a man of distinction in his obituary notices. The American, Mr. Nathan, has been sharply reproved in London for expressing in New York his real opinion of the late competent novelist and competent business man. However, the effort to

*See This Quarter for March, p. 460.

** *I saw Eternity the other night,*
Like a great Ring of pure and endless light.
Henry Vaughan.

observe the custom scrupulously results often in something very like irony; witness many of the anecdotes excreted into the press about Lord Birkenhead when that over-rated gentleman died. Likewise much of the matter which leaped into print to accompany the burial of Bennett seems to us to have been nothing other than hot air. We do not propose to add our ineffectual quota to it. In our view, it will be better to say something which may be of use to those readers who like what they read to start in them trains of meditation. Bennett, in one of those booklets which he termed " belles-lettres " and which we would call " works of self-edification," urged the person addressing himself to a famous book to bear in mind that if he were going to meet a great man, he would prepare himself for the occasion. He would rehearse his remarks, find out what the great one was an expert on, study his biography, and generally arrange to extract the utmost from the encounter. It was in the same way, said Bennett, that the person should begin reading a famous book. The person should remember that he was about to read the utterance of a great man and prepare to read it as he would prepare to meet its author in the flesh. We do not know whether people who are about to meet a prominent fellow-man actually prepare for the meeting in the way Bennett assumed they do. But certainly people, and especially young people, must remember with great vividness what a prominent fellow-man happens to say to them at their first meeting with him. Consequently, if it is desirable that a person about to meet a noted fellow-man should prepare for the meeting, it is equally desirable that the " big gun " himself should also make preparations. We think it is an indication of the limitations of Bennett that, while he considered it perfectly normal that an ordinary mortal should prepare himself for a meeting with one of the exalted, the need for the " great man " to prepare himself likewise never occurred to him. The Aerial Columnist stilll recalls very clearly Bennett's remarks on the occasion of the Columnist's first meeting with him, fifteen and a half years ago, when the Columnist was very young. Bennett's remarks were so banal that it pains the Columnist to find he cannot forget them.

THE PAINED HOSTESS

Before us lie two numbers of *Poetry*. One, dated February, bears the announcement on its cover that it "is edited by Louis Zukofsky" and there is a sub-title, "*Objectivists*" *1931*. In the other number, dated March, Miss Harriet Munroe has entered into her own again and prints an editorial, the text of which is that 'certain attributes of youth are a continual surprise to the elder world, and none is more astonishing than youth's violent rebellion against the immediately preceding generation". " The generations move swiftly in the arts," she says, and she goes on to point out that to Mr. Zukofsky,

" Robinson, Lindsay, Frost, Masters, Sandburg, Jeffers, Miss Millay, Amy Lowell, Elinor Wylie, the once-revolutionary imagists—these and the other unfortunates born too soon are lost forever in that age of darkness when there was " no literary production—none at all ". And " what are we offered in exchange ? " she asks. Apart from " a few familiar names ": Pound, Williams, Eliot, Cummings, Stevens, Miss Moore, Mr. McAlmon, and Reznikoff of the " straight-laced " (*sic*) " art ", the apples of Mr. Zukofsky's eye are " Messrs. Rakosi, Macleod, Rexroth, Oppen, Bunting, Hecht, Roskolenkier, Chambers, Wheelwright, Zolinsky, Richard Johns, and Mr. Zukofsky himself. " And Miss Munroe doubts, she says, whether the readers of *Poetry* will enthrone these new gods in the places of the old " in strict acceptance of Mr. Zukofsky's principles." Miss Munroe's editorial makes us think of a lady who has lent her house to friends. While they are there, she insists that they shall treat the house exactly as a home. But once they have gone and she herself has returned, she cannot restrain a cry of pain on seeing how they have left things. Where are the old family portraits which graced her walls—Robinson, Lindsay, Frost, *und so weiter?* Why, they have been taken down! And not only that, but other portraits hang in their place, portraits gleaming with the ugly newness of their freshly varnished and—heugh!—so modern impasto. Yes, we can sympathize with dear Harriet.

THE CALLOW CRITICASTER

In the days before literature had become so serious and so could still be taken seriously; in the days before we had our Ben Jonson served up to us in translation from the German and " culture " could not yet be turned on at the main and be absorbed in tabloids, metallic rasp and all; in fact, before " culture " had even become sweetness and light—in those good old days, reviews were reviews. When reviews, we mean to say, were in their heyday, their editors were mature men of the world and the contributors spoke with the voice of authority. Think of the *Mercure de France* as it was, of the *Revue des Deux Mondes* soon after it was founded. Think of the *Quarterly* when it could thunder, and of the *Edinburgh* when it said : " This will never do. " Think, too, of the time when you could open the *North American* and find in it something by one or both of the Brothers Adams. Of course the editors of today are not altogether to blame. We fell into talk recently with a young-ish man, who, it turned out, was the present editor of a review with a splendid past. He mentioned to us how, in the middle of the nineteenth century, great scientists had announced their momentous discoveries to the world through that review's pages. Neither Einstein nor the Prince de Broglie would dream of doing the same. Not only has the public changed, but the scientific discoveries

themselves are now intelligible only to the specially-trained. But if we would measure, in this respect, how are the mighty fallen, let us see the kind of publication which now ranks as an important review. We may speak the more freely of a *cher confrère* that we do not hold THIS QUARTER, though a quarterly, to be a *review*. Some years ago, then, an undergraduate at Harvard, Mr. Lincoln E. Kirstein, established what he called "A Harvard Miscellany." It was well produced. It wore a modest air, as became the youth of its editor-proprietor. It broke new ground. Hence it prospered. Others little older than Mr. Kirstein became associated with him, and the subtitle: "A Harvard Miscellany", was dropped. *The Hound & Horn* — for this is the periodical's name — began to pose as a national organ. And the point is, that it is now treated as one of *America's* important reviews. We read some months ago in *The Criterion* a statement over the initials "B. D." to the effect that *The Hound & Horn* is "the most interesting periodical in America." Far be it from our intention to denigrate the care and conscientiousness with which its editors do their job or the importance of the subjects with which its contributors seek to deal. But, we ask, what could be a plainer sign of the decline of the review than that a publication run by a group of youths, however talented, should occupy today a place once the place of the *North American?*

INGLORIOUS BUT NOT MUTE ELIOTS We are moved to these possibly acid remarks by the appearance at length, in the latest number of *The Hound & Horn* to reach Europe, of an article which it has announced for more than a year: *Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language*, by R. P. Blackmur. Mr. Blackmur was, for a time, managing editor of *The Hound & Horn*, we understand. He may be regarded as a typical contributor. On the other hand, Mr. Cummings is certainly a queer poet, very queer. Many of those who know what they like in reading-matter but do not know why they like it, many of those who are on the look-out for some inside dope wherewith to substantiate their praise of Mr. Cummings in places where one talks of what one hasn't read, or, if one has read, of what one hasn't apprehended, will welcome any apparent exegesis of the queerness—the scattered words, the punctuation in the wrong places, and all that. *Notes on E. E. Cummings' Language* is a good selling line. But those who pay their fifty cents on the assumption that Mr. Blackmur is providing a hearty dish will find, we fear, that they have taken home a pup. We shall advert only to two points. The first is this. In these *Notes*, Mr. Blackmur tells us that Mr. Cummings is a Romantic, and hence an egotist. The emotion he puts into his poems, that is to say, is his own private emotion. Now, the literary criticism which deals, not with the work of literature, but with its

author, is criticism of a well-known school: it is known as Romantic criticism. Mr Blackmur, in short, shows that he himself is what he reproaches Mr. Cummings with being. Why, then, reproach Mr. Cummings? The second point is as follows. In the *Notes*, Mr. Blackmur *states* that Mr. Cummings is a Romantic, an egotist, a member of "the anti-culture group." He also *states* that Mr. Cummings has, in his work, peculiarities of vocabulary. He lists a number of words which, he says, occur in this work frequently. The most favoured word, he goes on to say, is "flower," and if, so he declares, we inspect the uses to which this word is put, "we should have some sort of key to the kind of poetry he" [Mr. Cummings] "writes". But Mr. Blackmur entirely neglects to *show* that Mr. Cummings is a Romantic, an egotist, etc. And he entirely neglects to *show* that there is anything wrong or illegitimate in Mr. Cummings's use of the word "flower". In effect, Mr. Blackmur asks us to take his word, and no more. Also, he has altogether forgotten to supply some indication of the principles according to which he is, as he thinks, judging Mr. Cummings's poetry and its language. The *Notes*, indeed, like much other work in *The Hound & Horn*, bear the marks of a sinister influence exercised upon their writer by Mr. T. S. Eliot. Of course, for influencing Mr. Blackmur in this way, Mr. Eliot is not at all responsible; a writer cannot dictate how he will affect those who want to imitate him. But nevertheless his is the influence. As Americans are fond of saying, Mr. Eliot is given to "under-statement." Whereas André Gide claims that he suggests rather than affirms, Mr. Eliot, one may say, suggests *by* affirming. It is this under-statement which such of his imitators as Mr. Blackmur seek to imitate. But whereas reflection will usually reveal to the reader the grounds of Mr. Eliot's affirmations, the imitators make affirmations in which one can find no suggestion. Their affirmations are but affirmations, gratuitous, out of the blue. If a Guide to E. E. Cummings's Language is actually necessary, it has, we think, still to be written.

REQUIESCAT IMAGIST

DEAR MR. TITUS: I have just read the review of IMAGIST ANTHOLOGY, 1930, published in THIS QUARTER. I don't mind Anne Howe (whoever that moron may be) placing me in oblivion, for I have never pretended to having a left bank reputation. But I do object seriously to being held responsible for this Anthology. It was entirely Richard Aldington's idea. He collected the material and thought of the book in the first place. I was merely asked to write a foreword — I being at the time in the position of historian and chief grave-digger to the Imagists. I didn't see the contents of the Anthology until it was published and then I thought it rather poor. I hope this note will serve to clear my name in the matter. You might possibly care to make mention of my attitude in THIS QUARTER.

In any event, my best wishes to you.

GLENN HUGHES
University of Washington
Seattle, Washington.

DEAR SIR : A propos the " Imagist Anthology ", *is* it " fun "? Nobody, surely, would deny the ingenious typist his (or her) pittance of pleasure, and to be told that the compilation relieved not only spring boredom but impecuniosity quite assures at least myself. But in what way is the book so gay a *hoax*? I have no dictionary at hand, but am used to the word in pretty much the sense of your editorial note (June issue, Anne Howe) referring to Mr. Ford. It required no unnatural canniness in that inebriated Malaprop, Miss Howe, nor indeed in any one, " to scent " (though to snort and sneeze, perhaps...) mystery. Mysteries, as mysteries, are recognizable enough, and here the thing was particularly clear. But a hoax?

No anthology is wholly acceptable (not even Des Imagistes, nor Miss Lowell's) and I for one will buy a poem of, say, H D, whenever I see one, wherever printed. There were unmistakably what are cheerfully called lapses in this as to editing. But, as part of the public, as one even of the critics, I should like space to ask the anonymous typist (T. Q., sept.) what exactly we swallowed. None of us have been sick, and if it was fun, some has certainly been ours. As a trick to get money the book is one thing; as containing certain lines quite another. (As not including " the—alas, late—Mr. Pound " still another, but waive that.)

The point is, there are people, some of us contemporary in Miss Howe's unpleasantly nice sense (but nevertheless unaware that " Cézanne's apples " are " demoded " and indeed so contemporary as not to ask about modes, but, so to speak, *swallow* the apples, and even, carefully rejecting the pips, e. g. the anthology at issue)—there are people who do not cringe from " dyed-in-the-wool " reaction, and whom " blather, " neo-, belated, or other, will not divert from discrimination which may possibly prove rewarding. People who do not think reminiscence, even of Pan, must be mouldy; who do not find altogether, that " it is a question of intoxication " and regret rather than acclaim occasionally current delirium. Who, for brevity, had not heard that the " new word in the air " is Magic (spelt so) nor that this is better—nor, of course, worse, or anything but different from other words, itself a word.

We would not say, as Miss Howe says: " Not aesthetics, but life ". We are perhaps for one thing young, and if we are not we are not old enough, nor enough Pernod-ed, to fling off grand elliptical antitheses where the data we have to examine suggest for all we know, a synthesis or a soft paradox. But I have said already too much.

O which of the gifts of the gods
  is the best gift?
  this,
  this,
  this,
  this;

(At least, one good poem; pp. 69 ff).

CRAIG LA DRIÈRE,
Detroit, Mich.

INDEX

1930-1931

Vol. III, nos 1-2-3-4

A

Abel Offers the Lamb, Musical Composition, Marc Blitzstein, 440.
Altman, Nathan, *Drawing*, 33.
Anderson, Sherwood, *These Mountaineers*, 602.
Angelica, René Schickele, 260.
ART :
Altman, Nathan, *Drawing*, 33.
Baxte, Michael, *Drawing*, 635.
Chagall, Marc, *Drawing*, 61.
Chentoff, Polia, *Drawing*, 107.
De Bosschère, Jean, *St. Labre, Woodcut*, 311.
Emerson, Sybil, *Drawing*, 681.
Fletcher, John Gould, *Some Thoughts on French Painting* 1910-1930, 356.
Hiler, Hilaire, *Drawing*, 333.
Kann, F., *Project for Monumental Sculpture*, 503.
Le Cocq, Ivan, *Drawing*, 361.
Sheldon, Roy, *Drawing*, 237.
Survage, L., *Drawing*, 721.
Sussan, Ben, *Drawing*, 543.
Walkowitz, A., *Drawing*, 655.
Zhenya, *Drawing*, 153
Austrian Contributors, Notes On, The Editor, 308.
Autumn Courtship, An, Erskine Caldwell, 466.

B

Baxte, Michael, *Drawing*, 635.
Beer-Hofmann, Richard, *A Scene from Count Charolais, a tragedy*, 398.
Belgion, Montgomery, *Mr. Joyce and Mr. Gilbert*, 122; *The Mad Imagination*, 657.
Bicou, Alexei Remisov, 94.
Bigger and Worse Lies, Florida Pier, 644.
Black Prophecies, V. F. Calverton, 484.
Blitzstein, Marc, *Abel Offers the Lamb, Musical Composition*, 440.
Blodwen, Rhys Davies, 618.
Blum, Jerome, *Nipped in the Bud*, 313.
Body and Soul, Stefan George, 252.
Brookside Reverie, John Collier, 642.
Burnshaw, Stanley, *A Note on Translating Poetry*, 343.

C

Caldwell, Erskine, *An Autumn Courtship*, 466.
Calverton, V. F., *Black Prophecies*, 484.
Canyon, Virginia Hersch, 335.
Carnevali, Emanuel, *Sketches*, 540.
Cellar, The, Andrei Sobol, 84.
Chagall, Marc, *Drawing*, 61.
Chapter and a Half, A, A. S. Frere-Reeves, 545.
Character Sketch of Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig, 416.
Chasing the Climate, Poem, Alfred Kreymborg, 549.
Chentoff, Polia, *Drawing*, 107.
Christa, Maria Muhlgrabner, 422.
Citadel, The, Arnold Ulitz, 452.
Collier, John, « *Oh Soul be Changed into Little Water Drops* », 637; *Sunday Morning*, 637; *Excuse in Autumn*, 640; *Brookside Reverie*, 642
Count Charolais, A Scene from, a tragedy, Richard Beer-Hofmann, 398.
Coyle, Kathleen, *Vagrance*, 463.
Critiad, The, Yvor Winters, 738
Crosby, Jane Snowdon, *For Better or Worse*, 524.
Cummings, E.E. *Two Poems*, 473; *Three Poems*, 599.

D

Davies, Rhys, *Blodwen*, 618.
Death and the Poet, Samuel Putnam, 170.

Death Like Sun, Richard Thoma, 372.
De Bosschère, Jean, *St Labre. Woodcut*, 311.
Dina, Thomas Mann, 204.
Discovery, A. S. T. Tessimond, 697.
Döblin, Alfred, *The Use of Music in Literature*, 248.
Dog, The, M. Zoschtchenko, 29.
Donovan's Fool, Effingham Evarts, 553.
Drawings, Marc Chagall, 61; Polia Chentoff, 107; Hilaire Hiler, 333; Ivan Le Cocq, 361; Roy Sheldon, 237; Ben Sussan, 543; Zhenya, 153; Michael Baxte, 635; A. Walkowitz, 655; Sybil Emerson, 681; L. Survage, 721.
Dream, A, Romer Wilson, 667.
Dreyspring, Mary, *Summer Night*, 121.
Duhamel, Georges, *A Reply to My Critics*, 585.
Dunning, Ralph Cheever, *The Lady in the Cellar*, 117.

E

Earth-Bound, The, Janet Lewis, 142.
EDITORIALS :
Criticism à l'Irlandaise, 569.
Trip to Italy, A, 199.
T. S. Eliot's Translation of 'Anabase', 4.
Why People Travel, 383.
Ehrenburg, Ilya, *Merry Paola*, 37.
Emerson, Sybil, *Drawing*, 681.
Empire, Robert Penn Warren, 168.
Essenin, Sergei, *Poem*, 27; *My Mysterious World*, 35; *Letter to a Woman*, 114.
Evarts, Effingham, *Donovan's Fool*, 553.
Excuse in Autumn, John Collier, 640.

F

Farrell, James F., *Studs*, 187.
Faust, Soliloquy of, Poem, George Reavey, 341.
Fearing, Kenneth, *Three Men*, 685.
Felicitas, Heinrich Mann, 239.
Fenisong, Ruth, *Reincarnation*, 683.
Fletcher, Frances, *Sister Mary Carmen*, 363.
Fletcher, John Gould, *Marine Eden*, 178; *Some Thoughts on French Painting 1910-1930*, 356.
Flying Column, The, 181, 352, 521, 745.
For Better or Worse, Jane Snowdon Crosby, 524.
Fre-e-Reeves, A. S. *A Chapter and a Half*, 545.
Freud, Sigmund, Character Sketch of, Stefan Zweig, 416.

G

German Contributors, Notes On, The Editor, 308.
Gorky, Maxim, *Mother Kemsky*, 20.
George, Stefan, *Body and Soul*, 252; *The Man Who was Hanged*, 253; *The Man and the Goblin*, 255; *The Siren*, 258.

H

Herbst, Josephine, *I Hear You, Mr. and Mrs. Brown*, 709.
Hersch, Virginia, *Canyon*, 335.
Hesse, Hermann, *The Song of Abel's Death*, 298.
Highet, Gilbert, *Ninety Niggers*, 669.
Hiler, Hilaire, *Drawing*, 333.

I

I Hear You, Mr. and Mrs. Brown, Josephine Herbst, 709.

J

« James Joyce's 'Ulysses' Sartus Resartus, A Commentary on, Edward W. Titus 129.

K

Kann, F. *Project for Monumental Sculpture*, 503.
Kläber, Kurt, *Steerage*, 280.
Kreymborg, Alfred, *Chasing the Climate, Poem*, 549.

L

La Belle Ferronnière, A, Charles Seymour, Jr., 155.
Lady in the Cellar, The, Ralph Cheever Dunning, 117.
Lawrence, Lines for, Walter Lowenfels, 323.

Le Cocq, Ivan, *Drawing*, 361.
Letter to a Woman, Sergei Essenin, 114.
Lewis, Janet, *The Earth-Bound*, 142; *With the Spring*, 143.
Lewisohn, Ludwig, *The Weakness of Herman Melville*, 610.
Lines for Lawrence, Walter Lowenfels, 323.
Listen, Vladimir Mayakovsky, 105.
Little Tales, Feodor Sologub, 51.
Lowenfels, Walter, *Lines for Lawrence*, 323; *Minuet*, 324.
Lyle, Marius, *The Word Age*, 725.

M

Mad Imagination, The, Montgomery Belgion, 657.
Man Who was Hanged, The, Stefan George, 253.
Man and the Goblin, The, Stefan George, 255.
Mann, Thomas, *Dina*, 204.
Marine Eden, John Gould Fletcher, 178.
Marriage Hymn, Edward J. O'Brien, 695.
Mayakovsky in Heaven, Vladimir Mayakovsky, 47.
Mayakovsky, Vladimir, *Mayakovsky in Heaven*, 47; *Listen*, 105.
Melville, Herman, The Weakness of, Ludwig Lewisohn, 610.
Merry Paola, Ilya Ehrenburg, 37.
Metaphysic, Joseph Schrank, 723.
Minuet, Walter Lowenfels, 323.
Mother Kemsky, Maxim Gorky, 20.
Mr. Joyce and Mr. Gilbert, Montgomery Belgion, 122.
Muhlgrabner, Maria, *Christa*, 442
Music :
German Music, The Trend of Contemporary, Robert Oboussier, 300.
Musical Composition, Abel Offers the Lamb, Marc Blitzstein, 440.
Music in Literature, The Use of, Alfred Döblin, 248.
Music in Silence, Humbert Wolfe, 598.
My Mysterious World, Sergei Essenin, 35.

N

Ninety Niggers, Gilbert Highet, 669.
Nipped in the Bud, Jerome Blum, 313.
Notes on German Contributors, Edward W. Titus, 308.
Notes on Austrian Contributors, Edward W. Titus, 458.
November the Thirteenth, Russell Thorndike, 505.

O

Oboussier, Robert, *The Trend of Contemporary German Music*, 300.
O'Brien, Edward J., *Marriage Hymn*, 695.
« *Oh Soul be Changed into Little Water Drops* », John Collier, 637.

P

Papered Parlour, A, T. F. Powys, 156.
Pasternak, Boris, *Poem*, 83.
Pier, Florida, *Bigger and Worse Lies*, 644.
Poems :
Collier, John, « *Oh Soul be Changed into Little Water Drops* », 637; *Sunday Morning*, 639; *Excuse in Autumn*, 640; *Brookside Reverie*, 642.
Cummings, E. E. *Two Poems*, 473; *Three Poems*, 599.
Dreyspring, Mary, *Summer Night*, 121.
Essenin, Sergei, *Poem*, 27; *My Mysterious World*, 35; *Letter to a Woman*, 114.
Fenisong, Ruth, *Reincarnation*, 683.
Fletcher, John Gould, *Marine Eden*, 178.
George, Stefan, *Body and Soul*, 252; *The Man Who was Hanged* 253; *The Man and the Goblin*, 255; *The Siren*, 258.
Kreymborg, Alfred, *Chasing the Climate*, 549.
Lewis, Janet, *The Earth-Bound*, 142.
Lowenfels, Walter, *Lines for Lawrence*, 323; *Minuet*, 324.
Mayakovsky, Vladimir, *Mayakovsky in Heaven*, 47; *Listen*, 105.
O'Brien, Edward J., *Marriage Hymn*, 695.
Pasternak, Boris, *Poem*, 83.

Reavey George, *Soliloquy of Faust*, 341.
Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Two Poems*, 424.
Schrank, Joseph, *Metaphysic*, 723.
Seymour, Charles, Jr., *A la Belle Ferronnière*, 155.
Tessimond, A.S.T., *Discovery*, 697.
Tikhonov, Nicolai, *Poems*, 59, 93.
Van Wyck, William, *Three Sonnets for Fifty*, 370.
Warren, Robert Penn, *Empire*, 168.
Wilson, Romer, *A Dream*, 667.
Winters, Yvor, *The Critiad*, 738.
Wolfe, Humbert, *Music in Silence*, 598.
Poetry, A Note on Translating, Stanley Burnshaw, 343.
Powys, T.F., *A Papered Parlour*, 156.
Priestley, J.B., *That Quarter*, 675.
Prishvin, Mikhail, *A Serpent*, 109.
Project for Monumental Sculpture, F. Kann, 503.
Putnam, Samuel, *Death and the Poet*, 170.

Q

Queried Observations, Arthur Schnitzler, 391.

R

Reavey, George, *Soliloquy of Faust, poem*, 341; *Some Russian Notes*, 12.
Reincarnation, Ruth Fenisong, 683.
Remisov, Alexei, *Bicou*, 94.
Reply to My Critics, A, Georges Duhamel, 585.
Rilke, Rainer Maria, *Two Poems*, 424.

S

Sartor Resartus, A Commentary on, « James Joyce's 'Ulysses' », Edward W. Titus, 129.
Schickele, René, *Angelica*, 260.
Schnitzler, Arthur, *Queried Observations*, 391.
Schrank, Joseph, *Metaphysic*, 723.
Serpent, A, Mikhail Prishvin, 109.
Seymour, Charles, Jr., *A La Belle Ferronnière*, 155.
Sheldon, Roy, *Drawing*, 237.
Siren, The, Stefan George, 258.
Sister Mary Carmen, Frances Fletcher, 363.
Sketches, Emanuel Carnevali, 540.
Slesinger, Tess, *Young Wife*, 698.
Sobol, Andrei, *The Cellar*, 84
Soliloquy of Faust, Poem, George Reavey, 341.
Sologub, Feodor, *Little Tales*, 51.
Some Russian Notes, George Reavey, 12.
Some Thoughts on French Painting 1910-1930, John Gould Fletcher, 356.
Song of Abel's Death, The, poem, Hermann Hesse, 298.
Sonnets for Fifty, Three, William Van Wyck, 370.
Sprietsma, Henry Cargill, *Stowaway*, 325.
St. Labre, Woodcut, Jean de Bosschère, 311.
Steerage, Kurt Kläber, 280.
Stowaway, Henry Cargill Sprietsma, 325.
Studs, James F. Farrel, 187.
Summer Night, Mary Dreyspring, 121.
Sunday Morning, John Collier, 639.
Survage, L, *Drawing*, 721.
Sussan, Ben, *Drawing*, 543.
Swift, Dr., Exegesis on, Allen Tate, 475.

T

Tales, Efim Zozulya, 63.
Tate, Allen, *An Exegesis on Dr. Swift*, 475.
Tessimond, A.S.T., *Discovery*, 697.
That Quarter, J. B. Priestley, 675.
These Mountaineers, Sherwood Anderson, 602.
Thoma, Richard, *Death Like Sun*, 372.
Thorndike, Russell, *November the Thirteenth*, 505.
Three Men, Kenneth Fearing, 685.
Tikhonov, Nicolai, *Poems*, 59, 93.

Titus, Edward W., *Editorials*, 4, 199, 383, 569; *Sartor Resartus, A Commentary on « James Joyce's 'Ulysses' »*, 129; *Notes on German Contributors*, 308; *Notes on Austrian Contributors*, 458.
Tramps, K. H. Waggerl, 426.
Translating Poetry, A Note on, Stanley Burnshaw, 343.
Trend of Contemporary German Music, The, Robert Oboussier, 300.

U

Ulitz, Arnold, *The Citadel*, 452.
Use of Music in Literature, The, Alfred Döblin, 248.

V

Vagrance, Kathleen Coyle, 463.
Van Wyck, William, *Three Sonnets for Fifty*, 370.

W

Waggerl, K H., *Tramps*, 426.
Walkowitz, A, *Drawing*, 655.
Warren, Robert Penn, *Empire*. 168.
Weakness of Herman Melville, The, Ludwig Lewisohn, 610.
Wilson, Romer, *A Dream*, 667.
Winters, Yvor, *The Critiad*, 738.
With the Spring, Janet Lewis, 143.
Wolfe, Humbert, *Music in Silence*, 598.
Word Age, The, Marius Lyle, 725.

Y

Young Wife, Tess Slesinger, 698.

Z

Zhenya, *Drawing*, 153.
Zoshtchenko, M., *The Dog*, 29.
Zozulya Efim, *Tales*, 63.
Zweig, Stefan, *Character Sketch of Sigmund Freud*, 416.